

A HOLISTIC APPROACH AND MODEL
TO REBUILD A SMALL
RURAL CHURCH

Homer Fritz Williams Jr.

B.S., Angelo State University, 1993
MDiv, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998

Mentors

G. Martin Young, DMin
Alfred Thompson, DMin

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
May 2017

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
DEDICATION	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS	5
Introduction.....	5
First Baptist Needs.....	5
Review of Skills.....	10
The Convergence	11
Conclusion	13
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	14
Introduction.....	14
Nehemiah 2:11-18.....	18
Matthew 16:18	38
Conclusion	52
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS	54
Introduction.....	54

4.	THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	75
	Introduction.....	75
	Restoration Theology.....	76
	Liberation Theology.....	79
	Theology of Prayer	83
	Organizational Leadership	86
	Conclusion	90
5.	THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	92
	Introduction.....	92
	Organizational Leadership Theory	94
	Psychology: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.....	97
	Sociology of Architecture Theory	101
	Conclusion	105
6.	PROJECT ANALYSIS	107
	Introduction.....	107
	Methodology	111
	Implementation	115
	Summary of Learning	119
	Conclusion	122
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	125

ABSTRACT

A HOLISTIC APPROACH AND MODEL TO REBUILD A SMALL RURAL CHURCH

by
Homer Fritz Williams Jr.
United Theological Seminary, 2017

Mentor

G. Martin Young, DMin
Alfred Thompson, DMin

This project addresses the congregational response to restorative processes. The context of this project is First Baptist Church, Lockhart, Texas. The problems of a depraved physical building; relationship disconnections among congregants; and growing parishioner apathy, will be addressed. The researcher hypothesizes if First Baptist Church rebuilds the walls of her physical structure then she will encounter an awakening of purpose and a restoration of commitment. The researcher will apply the techniques of qualitative research methodology to test his proposed treatment of the restorative challenges facing First Baptist Church of Lockhart, TX.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A former seminary student who interned at a church was asked to give some remarks via video during Church Anniversary celebration, simply stated “Grateful.” The same word I share to all who have loved and labored with me during the pursuit of the Doctoral degree. I acknowledge with gratefulness a loving wife, Tandelyn Williams, for her love and support during the tenure and travail. You have allowed your husband to pursue a goal and trusted God in what He was doing. Thank you for trusting God as He creates in us something beautiful. I love her as Isaac loved Rebecca, Jacob loved Rachel, and Christ loves the Church. Donovan and Khaliah, Carlton and Shar’Ronda while we are a blended family our order goes Carlton, Donovan, Shar’Ronda, and Khaliah. Ne’lexia Galloway calls me her dad and doesn’t allow me to forget that she’s really the eldest child. While she is not biologically mine my love for her is the same as my own biological children. Grow in grace my children and you too will always be grateful. The late Esther Thompson was the best grandmother in the universe. She was to me as Paul expressed of Timothy’s grandmother Lois, full of faith. I’m grateful for the time and I miss her and wish she was alive to see this accomplishment.

The solid rocks and foundation has always been my parents Homer and Shirley Williams Sr. Words cannot express how grateful I am God chose these two to raise and nurture me. Mom and Dad you’ll are the best parents anyone could ever have in the world. Times were not always the best but we did not see any difference. Today we

have far exceeded what your imagined expectations. I love you and grateful. Dr. Deirdre A. Williams, the only sibling and the youngest. Well, you obtained your doctoral degree before your big brother and now I follow you, grateful to have a sister. Earl “Skipper” Jackson Jr. my god-brother and his wife Rosalind the “Florence Nightingale” of visitation ministry, and Earind Coi their daughter thank you. I am Grateful for all of my family.

May of 1998, a professor shared with me to continue to pursue Theological education and the Lord would use me in ways unknown. Those words would be followed by countless others who would ask when will you go back and get your doctorate. The work of the ministry would always garner most of my time. Now some Twenty-seven years from then the pursuit is completed. Those who were encouraging and insightful and have transitioned from labor to reward: Henry and Esther Thompson, Odessa Williams-Freeman, Dora Lee Scaggs, Mozella James, Rev. Earl and Claudia Jackson Sr., Rev. Billy and Nathene Brown, Oscar “Daddy Ray” Williams, Bennie Carter, Rev. J. Carlton Allen, and Uncle A D Arnic.

There have been institutions and places of matriculation providing friendships, fertile ground for my spiritual development, and future pursuits. Kelvin Kelley my college football teammate who provided leadership then and now. Apostle Theodore and Barbara Boone who became my father in the ministry back in 1989. The Boones welcomed me into their home during the college years and now have become not only spiritual models but second parents. Our bond is so close in the event anything happens to my biological parents they immediately take the role of my natural parents. The Rev. T.L. Garner Jr. who was the pastor of First Baptist Church during my college years when

I moved back to Lockhart. He accepted me as his own son in the ministry and gave me opportunities most associate ministers do not receive. He did not follow the traditional model of ordaining associates as most Black Baptist ministers. They only ordain an associate upon a call to a church or to serve in an official ministerial capacity. The Rev. Dr. Jerry William Dailey the proud pastor of the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church and mentor supported me and granted access into Seminary to obtain the Master of Divinity at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. These are very important in setting a foundational stage for my spiritual profession.

The late Dr. E. Thurman Walker the mentor, pastor, spiritual social activist, friend and brother. I am always full of words and lost for words of his impact and influence upon my ministry and life. Pastor Walker was the man. He provided for me an opportunity to go beyond, beyond. No boundaries in God as long as you respect the boundaries God provides. The day Rosalind Jackson introduced me to you began a lifelong friendship. Your battle with cancer would take you at fifty years of age, and now you're in the heavenly grandstand cheering us on. The joy of eating soul food again would be a second delight after this commencement. Jo, thank you and we "WILLBE." I am grateful for God's placement at Antioch and my service to you. Grateful for the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church family and pastor Dr. Kenneth Kemp and big sister 1st Lady Velma who provided opportunity to grow and develop. Pat Casey, my friend and the heartbeat of Antioch we are still holding solid until the Lord says different. You told me to pursue my Doctor of Ministry and now here it is Patti. Love you and thanks for being a sister but most of all friend.

The Rev. Dr. G. Martin Young and The Rev. Dr. Alfred Thompson the mentors who are steady encouragers and sound men of the Gospel. Dr. Young, your intuition and brash method of infused enthusiasm encouraged me when I did not want to continue. Your consistent phone calls were always timely and provided the fuel when the tank was empty. You're my brother. Dr. Thompson, your genuine character does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. You provided the detailed regiment we needed to be what God and UTS desired. You became my drumbeat when it was needed the most and your wisdom for guidance through ministry. Our cohort has benefited from both of your commitment to the success of each of us. I am grateful for mentoring men.

The Rev. Nathl Moore, the Rev. John Page and I started the journey three years ago not fully sure of the process, but we were committed to graduate. We have been through a challenging and encouraging process, but we worked for the success of each other. Since San Jose, CA. we have grown so close to each other now we do not want it to end. "It's so hard to say goodbye to yesterday," we shall continue the fellowship. Only God knew of this United Theological experience. To all my brothers and sisters who have struggled and or struggling just remember the late Dr. G. Wayne Thompson of our group saying, "Not on my watch." The Dr. Caroles Taylor big brother from Columbia, MO, The Dr. Herbert Temoney big brother roomie from South Carolina, The Dr. James Gibson, The Dr. Thomas Fisher, The Rev. Justin Shamell, The Rev. Benjamin Carroll, The Rev. Charles Jackson, The Rev. Albert Jackson, The Rev. Tyrone Jackson, The Rev. Kenneth Allen, The Rev. Alexis Shelley, The Rev. Vonda Batts, and The Rev. Tony Craddock, we are up on this wall together keeping watch for each other. Thank

each of you for friendship and fellowship making this educational experience spiritually profitable. I am grateful for the moments forming an eternal bond between each of us.

I want to acknowledge Dr. Dr. Harold Hudson and the United Theological Seminary family for providing a theological education experience. The parting views of each intensive from start to finish have given me such depth and fresh insight to my professional and personal experience. I am grateful to the exposure of Dayton in the fall and winter intensives coming from the southern part of America it was great to enjoy the warmth, cold and snow. The intensive focus on disabilities helped to encourage me to use what God has given me to the fullest. The intensive focus upon debt free churches was very stimulating and provided a catalyst for expanding vision and clearing the clutter. I am grateful and thank you for the exposure.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the First Baptist Church of Lockhart, Texas. I know all of you have been prayerful and supportive of my pursuit. You are the church of my childhood and I'm blessed to be the pastor. God only knew the travail of what was to transpire in a boy growing up to become a man from a small town in Texas. There is truly no experience like the First experience and you'll have made this experience one to treasure for the rest of my life. Small towns may be overlooked but it's nothing like small town life and living.

In His Service,

Homer Fritz Williams Jr.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the members of the First Baptist Church of Lockhart, Texas. FBC called me four years ago to become the twentieth pastor in the one hundred and thirty-ninth year history. Many are able to share their identity based upon where they are from and I gladly pronounce I am from Lockhart, Texas and First Baptist Church is my home church. My love for the church has always had depth and somehow I knew my path would lead me back home.

Thank you to all of those who have been supportive and have remained faithful in your service and leadership. Some have left due to personal aspirations, personal preferences, personal problems but you have remained and God is to be praise and you encouraged. You have been instrumental in helping me examine and re-examine what it means to serve in leadership capacity in the rural.

First Baptist we have learned to trust God in the process and I thank you for trusting God to use me to “Restore the Walls.” I dedicate this project to you.

INTRODUCTION

The current context of ministry is at First Baptist Church in Lockhart, Texas. First Baptist is in the city of Lockhart a small city in a rural agricultural context. First Baptist is the oldest African American Baptist Church in Lockhart at one hundred and thirty-nine years. Historically the church has served the Eastside community of Lockhart where primarily the African American population lived. The current population has changed, and many African Americans no longer live in a central location. The church is also one of three Baptist churches in the city. One of the churches is a split from First Baptist.

The current pastor was called to serve as the twentieth pastor of the church on the first Sunday of April 2013. He is originally a native of Lockhart and was born and raised in First Baptist. He was serving as a full-time staff minister at Antioch Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas upon receiving the call to First Baptist. He has over twenty-five years of ministry experience. The pastor comes home to First Baptist where parents, sister, cousins, and friends remain as faithful worshippers and contributors. The pastor's initial challenge was to "Pray, love, and serve." Later his vision for the church would become "Celebrating the past, changing the present, and creating future." The goals were to allow the church to acknowledge their celebrated past, engage their present, to experience a new reality.

First Baptist Church similar many other churches in America whether urban or rural faces great challenges. One of the main challenges is the deteriorating facility. The main worship facility is over seventy years old and comprised of old and new timber from when the original church burned down over seventy years ago. Due to wear and tear the trusses within the roof are beginning to bow downward and have caused liability concerns. The next challenge was the rediscovery of identity and mission of knowing who we are, and what we are to do, and how we are to do it. These two needs must be addressed as the church continues to face like many churches her survival.

The project proposed facing the challenges to remedy the problem to have a rebuilding project. One of the former pastors used a theme of “Building Walls.” The current pastor had a new theme of “Rebuilding the Walls of First Baptist Church,” this was a necessary step. The need to rebuild the outer and inner walls of the facility is necessary. In reality, it is not a safe space to house people under the threat of a roof that could open possible cave in at any time. The need of restored physical facility is of primary importance. The second was to restore Christian identity. The re-engagement of spiritual formation and discipleship to rediscover what it means to be a Christian is another process to engage. The next need is organizational leadership development. Some processes of old are good, but they too grow old and need to be updated, or a better method of practice must be engaged. Some leadership principles and methods are outdated.

The chapters will provide the following. Chapter one provides an assessment of how the researcher arrived at the proposed ministry model. The chapter will provide an introduction to the context of ministry, the needs of the context covering demographic

and historical background analysis, the review of skills by engaging the tools possessed by the research, the converging of the analysis for a report on the context, and the conclusion addressing the context to determine the project. The conclusion will address the areas of need and how the researcher will engage the restoration. Chapter two covers the Biblical Foundations. There are different leadership models but there is no one size fits all model. Those who serve must seek to understand and know their context and how to address the needs from within it. The five step method used in the book by Fredrick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe in *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* was the method used to outline the chapter. The focused Old Testament scripture is found in Nehemiah 2:11-18, where Nehemiah obtains the official privilege of returning to his homeland to restore the broken down walls of Jerusalem. Upon the return he meticulously confronts the opposition, assesses the devastated walls, motivates and challenges the inhabitants of Jerusalem to join in the rebuilding process. The New Testament focus was Matthew 16:18 when Jesus declares “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Matthew and Nehemiah become ideal for the scriptural foundation to rebuilding the walls. Chapter three is the Historical Foundations chapter and it focuses upon the history of the Black Baptist church in America in particular the formation of the Baptist denomination in America, the forming of the Black church in the North and South during slavery and the Civil War, the forming Baptist missionary societies during Post-Civil War/Reconstruction years, and the forming of Black Baptist churches and their zeal for independence and identity, and the formation of the National Baptist Convention in America. First Baptist’s history is part of the struggle to sustain her rich Baptist heritage. Chapter four introduces the Theological Foundations within this chapter by investigating

the spiritual implications of restoration. The religious systems of restoration theology, liberation theology, the theology of prayer, and organization leadership will be explored to correlate the concept of restoration to the biblical story of Nehemiah. Chapter five the Theoretical Foundations chapter will explore academic disciplines related to theories of building restoration among people within an organization. The exploration of combining philosophies to restoration such as Organizational Leadership, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the Sociology of Architecture provided insight in how to address restoration of building and people. Lastly, chapter six provides the project analysis, methodology, implementation, summary of learning, and conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

The needs of First Baptist Church are consistent with any congregation in America, yet the rural setting presents unique challenges. Reviewing the current needs of First Baptist Church has created a process of continual learning and examining the context. The process of learning the needs have burgeoned questions that shed light on restoration, discipleship, leadership, and community development.

First Baptist Needs

First Baptist Church was established in 1877 and in the one hundred and thirty-seven-year history the church has had twenty pastors, and the current is the twentieth. While the church has had strong preacher pastors, the history does not reflect tenure until 1949. Since 1949 until now there are four pastors who have served more than five years. Thomas Rainer's research has stated, "the average stay of a pastor at a church is three to four years."¹ Certainly, First Baptist story is not unlike any story but as highlighted in the history leadership tenure is a concern to the growth development and morale of First Baptist. The congregational tendency is to use the process of calling the pastor as an

¹ Thomas Rainer, "Growing Healthy Churches Together," <http://thomrainer.com>, June 18, 2014, accessed November 21, 2014, <http://thomrainer.com/2014/06/dangerous-third-year-pastoral-tenure/>.

indicator of experiencing the larger congregational mindset. This tendency has led to many unhealthy practices. How long will this pastor be here? The rural church body ideology of an incoming pastor; they will not be here long, and they are only using us as a stepping stone to something better. This inconsistency has created low morale, unbalanced core values, and membership turnover. Membership turnover is those members who become attracted to the pastoral leader's style. When the pastoral leader transitions to new context these members end up sacrificing and moving membership or discontinue participation, due to disapproval and this may come because of a pastor being voted out, moving on to a new assignment, or disagreement of a new pastoral leader is called. The Apostle Paul gave us in Ephesians chapter four a model of unity in the body to build and sustain the church. The New Testament church in Jerusalem gives us an example of not only how the church began but also how through its transformation the Apostles and converts maintained stability in leadership and the church grew in numbers but especially as disciples. This growth also produced community amongst believers in worship and geographical locality. The itinerant minister was a model that produces a sustainable worship pattern and pastoral leadership for those churches which had no full-time minister. Now many of the rural and smaller city churches have full-time pastors working thirty to forty hours a week. Still, the issue is tenure at First Baptist and discovering why pastoral leaders do not stay more than five years.

It is important to examine all the aspects of the life of the congregation when in transition. The African American population in this community has dispersed, and the numbers have decreased church membership. This rural church and its ministry face a huge dilemma of how to engage in producing a sustainable change of identity and

ministry. The rural community engaged in strategic or scenario planning should see how the changes appear for a church in the facing urbanization of rural America. Reading through D. Darrell Griffin's book *Navigating Pastoral Leadership in the Transition Zone* he shares insight from a book *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating, Vision, Shaping Values, & Empowering Change*, Leighton says, "Leadership always involves change, moving people from one point to another, from the old way of doing things to the new, from the security in the past to the insecurity of the future."² As the pastor prayed for insight and inspiration and reflected upon the church's needs, he created a church theme at the beginning of 2014 "Celebrating the past, changing the present, and creating future."³ D. Darrell Griffin also says, "Successful ministry is about making the turn."⁴ He believes this theme and statement addresses the need to institute a process of change within First Baptist Church to assist both the church and pastor with the non-negotiable of transition.

The current leadership has observed a major area of transition in the life of First Baptist is the need to address the condition of its physical structure. As evidenced in the story of Nehemiah, addressing the structural physical needs are essential for transitioning a church into an improved future. Nehemiah led Israel into a brighter future by motivating them to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The initiative required transitional leadership unifying and motivating Israel as a congregation to rebuild. First Baptist's present pastor believes the physical structure and the individual have a connection. As

² Leighton, Ford, *Transforming: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values & Empowering Change* (Downs Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 251.

³ Homer Fritz Williams, *Church Theme 2014*, First Baptist Church 2014.

⁴ D. Darrell Griffin, *Navigating Pastoral Leadership in the Transition Zone* "Arriving in the middle of the movie," (Washington, D.C.: MMGI Books, 2012), 1.

like Nehemiah, the rebirth of hope in God is found in holistically restoring all those key elements in being. Achievement of such a goal requires transparency in the transition.

The need for transformation and change is clear as dialogue has begun between leader and people to begin to establish mission and vision from the people. The re-establishment of First Baptist church's identity is another assessment of need. Jesus said, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?... But who do you say that I am?"⁵ First Baptist and pastor must discover their identity. Through theological lenses, we must discover who we are? The next process is to discover why are we here? Then another question Jesus raised from this passage and reflected upon First Baptist's situation is how are we to do the will of God for the church and pastor? Everyone who follows Jesus must be able to articulate and reveal who Jesus is and from this revelation is birthed an understanding of God intended identity and purpose. The will of the Father is birth.

Some of this particular transformative identity was identified during the initial year of leading First Baptist. The lack of identity has caused the church to suffer historically, denominationally, and geographically. The questions of identity examined and how to begin a process of discovering and implementing a new identity. A person cannot move forward unless he or she knows whom he or she is. Then also how do we align ourselves with those like-minded in practice and preaching? How do go forward in a community that is not who we are? Many black churches are Missionary Baptist in practice and title, but First Baptist to one's knowledge and discovery has never been in the title but has in practice. The next has been to establish church identity by

⁵ New American Standard Bible, Matthew 16:13-15. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this document are from the NASB.

acknowledging the reflection in our church history, a Black or African American Baptist church. The church over time has experienced growth with Anglo's and Hispanic's joining the church, and this growth was not exponential to where there were less African American members. To examine the context, we must fully understand our history and to celebrate who we are and where we have come. Liberation or freedom allows the church to definitively answer the question in the present context and celebrate the past in the history. First Baptist Church is historically an African American church with members who are of different ethnicities. The next point of identity was to acknowledge further our community has changed and the churches identity may not fully engage the new community surrounding the church. We determined to know the gifts within the ministry context, and while discovering gifts, we assessed the ongoing challenge of individuals and church corporately not knowing their identity as a whole. The church has suffered fractured relationships due to inherent family dynamics within the church, disagreements between leader and pastor, and the inability to communicate to maintain stability. The re-discovery of purpose is reborn from this initial seminar, and some of the congregation is beginning to know who they are in Christ and what the will of God is for their life. The Matthew sixteen challenge is the beginning of changing the way we think about ourselves. The rediscovery of purpose and mission knowing who we are, what we are to do, and how we are to do it is the greatest challenge of First Baptist. Frederick Buechner says, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."⁶ The church, community and city will change as we discover our identity.

⁶ Frederick Buechner, *Wishful thinking: A Seeker's ABC*, (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers 1973).

Review of Skills

The main reviewable skill is that of prior knowledge of the present context, and that is knowledge of the context which gives some insight into history. The current pastor was born, raised, educated, employed, baptized, and developed socially here. His foundation socially, theologically, and academically all began here in this contextual system. He is aware of much of the history of this city, county, and community which has formed her identity. His identity, for the first twenty-five years, is culturally rooted within this context. His matriculation through college in Oklahoma and West Texas exposed him to different cultures, forms of thoughts, beliefs, and bias', and relationships.

Serving in full-time ministry at Antioch Baptist Church, in an urban context, over a period of twenty-one years provides experience, longevity, and stability with the new context. Serving Antioch in different capacities has provided the longevity needed to serve. Ten years served as Youth Minister, five years as Assistant to the Pastor, one year as Personal Assistant to the Pastor, and five as the Young Adult & Seniors Minister provided a sense of calling, values, and knowing the role as a servant for God's kingdom. The formation of relationships established and dissolved during tenure there. Serving in a larger church provided exposure and interaction at many levels that challenged value systems, the formation of personal mission, and developed inherent and spiritual gifts. The urban ministry experience afforded gain in ministry exposure and knowledge outside of full-time ministry through collaborative work with para-church ministries, Urban Leadership initiatives, and urban non-profit organizations. These experiences have developed values and goals to help maintain direction to keep focused and finish the assignment of service. The Apostle Paul told Archippus in Colossians 4:17, "Take heed

to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”⁷ These skills will assist in the forging of old and new relationships between pastor and congregants. Trusting in God’s process of time to grow and unite a fractured church and community.

The Convergence

The question of how does his spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis come together to determine the initial foundational premise of rebuilding physical walls by rebuilding spiritual walls. The church has been part of a community for one hundred and thirty-seven years, and many have come and gone. The question raised does anyone know what being a Christian mean anymore? How does one know if they are a Disciple of Jesus Christ? Who are you? What are the characteristics of a Disciple? These questions of formation come from the Bible and have God-given spiritual implications. The restoration of spiritual core values applies as reflected upon in the spiritual autobiography and the contextual analysis. When a person does not have the right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, his spiritual value system is dysfunctional. The process of restoring core values calls for the development of a congregational statement of purpose to determine who we are as a church in the community as God’s established body. The church looked upon as the beacon of hope, and there is a need for the wind to blow and restore life to re-establish the identity of those who once were the light.

⁷ NASB, Colossians 4:17.

The community has a genuine mindset of community relationship by helping people when situations arise, and the community comes together to meet the need. The issue is why does sacrifice only happen when there is a crisis? The usual mindset is driven by “This is a good thing to do then this is what Christ has purposed us to do.” Matthew chapter 16:18 provides what Christ purposes us to do. Jesus calls for His disciples to affirm who the crowd is declaring Him to be. Then Jesus asks a pointed question directed solely at the disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Peter declares, “Thou art the Christ.” Within this comes discovering the struggle with becoming whom God has destined one to be through Jesus Christ. The pastor’s journey is similar it is a discipleship journey with the struggle to meet destiny as he engages the personal dreams and goals, career development, and a community full of people unwilling to address their hopelessness.

The issue of faithfulness in service to God compared to the earthly desire never granted is part of the pastors spiritual journey. The convergence deals with why do some get the desires of his or her heart and not the faithful? “What happens to a dream deferred?”⁸ The dream has consisted of a return home, as Nehemiah returned, so does the pastor. The dream deferred while matriculating through college, service for over twenty-one years at another church, to applying for the vacant pastoral position at First Baptist, and receiving the official call to become the pastor allows a dream to come true. The dream of leader, people and community converge as we rediscover hope, faith, and destiny at First Baptist Church.

⁸ Rampersad, Arnold. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf; 1995), 387.

Conclusion

The content of this chapter seeks to address the needs of the current context served. The areas of need are restoration of the physical building, restoring Christian identity, leadership, and evangelism. These topics will be further engaged as the DMin project continues development. First Baptists needs to rebuild the outside and inside of the current facility. The church needs to re-engage spiritual formation and discipleship as means to re-establish what it mean to be a Christian. Develop organizational leadership principles to sustain pastoral leadership and core values of those serving in leadership at the church. The nature of the project will center on restoration, Christian Discipleship and leadership in how one struggles to serve God.

Lastly, the pastor wants to learn more from the current context and what has caused such a low morale in the church, community, and city. The discovery should involve uncovering fears, strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses within the church and community. Establishing genuine relationships with new congregants, community leaders, and local ministers will develop new relationships and a thread to weave into the tapestry of the community. Re-establishing a pastoral connection with former members and those who have decided to be non participants in the transition of the new incoming pastor. Although the excitement and enthusaism has waned the reconnect or restoration of relationships seeks discovery of new purpose to cause revival. The ultimate task is restoration. How does God desire to use us to inspire the community and affect our city? As God reveals Himself so shall we respond as we confess Him as Lord and we are restored by forgiveness and obedience. Through the restorative process we shall identify those areas to rebuild the walls of the church while re-establishing our Christian identity.

TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The issues in a small town or city are similar yet starkly different to the big cities. Leadership addressed by many authors, self-help motivational gurus, successful corporate executives, and top church and para-church professionals. These persons or organizations give a plethora of information on characteristics of leaders, how to develop leaders and even reflections on the attitude and behavior of great leaders. The dominant subject matter is applied leadership principles. While the core characteristics are universally applicable regardless of context, the implementation of those characteristics may vary depending upon context. The implicit assumption is one size may fit all.

The dominant writers on leadership come from the business and education, and the books on or about leadership abound from the business world. Jim Collins examines why some corporations fail under one leader and become successful under another in his book *Good to Great*. Doris Kearns Goodwin has written some books of personality and leadership qualities of presidents John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, Lyndon Johnson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt. The model of the presidency and the business world lead from a position of dominance and economic incentives and addresses many subjects as it applies to leadership. The dominant subject matter is applied leadership principles. The implicit assumption is one size may fit all.

There are inherent problems and benefits when crossing disciplines with leadership models. The church provides an interesting context for leadership principles derived from leadership gurus in other disciplines. While these principles work in their respective disciplines, it may be a hardship for the church. With the potential for both pastoral and organizational leadership turnover, the church struggles with the implementation and the application of these leadership principles. Often the pastor comes in with a new vision or model for church leadership. In many cases, there is not an adequate evaluation of the existing leadership training modules before an implementation of a new model.

The assumption of these leadership models is the context does not matter. Many developed by individuals who have the time and the staff needed to implement such models. Also, many of the models developed with full-time working staff persons in mind and urban settings. The rural volunteer context provides a much different experience than these writers are addressing. The context of ministry service has rendered for more than two and half years. It is within this context leadership models needs to be developed. Nehemiah provides a model of leadership for revitalizing individuals, churches, and communities who have lost a sense of identity, broken, enslaved, and facing the destruction of their city and homes. The model of Nehemiah is a tool for the revitalization of First Baptist Church of Lockhart, Texas.

First Baptist Church founded in “1877 in Lockhart, Texas, by the Reverend J.H. Carter and members.”¹ Lockhart is a rural community. The church has been in existence for one hundred and thirty-eight years. The church was first located on the northwest

¹ First Baptist Church, 1977, “Church Centennial Anniversary Program: Church History.”

side of town and later moved to her current east location at 514 Neches Street. The current name of the church debated over the years, and no conclusion determined as to how the church received her name. First Baptist has been able to retain the title as the first African-American Baptist church in the city while the Anglo church holds the same title and status.

First Baptist, since its existence, has always undergone some form of a building program. Most of the pastors were remodeling existing structures and not building new ones. While under the leadership of First Baptist's third pastor, Reverend Smiley, the church was destroyed in a severe storm. The church came together and rebuilt the church and added a wing on both sides. The church mortgage was paid off and burned under the leadership of the fifth pastor, Reverend G.W. Wilson. Other pastors did many repairs, additions, and renovations from the sixth to tenth. Then in 1949, the church called her eleventh pastor Reverend Elliot Grant. Reverend Grant was known as a soul winner and a man of the people. He was known to walk the "hot spots" just to talk to people, and as a result, the salvation of many souls. In 1956, Pastor Grant gave a series of messages on Building Walls. The congregation came together with a mind to work and contracted Deacon W.T. Brite, Chairman of Deacon Board to build the church. On First Sunday in December 1956, the members marched from the church in the rear to her current position.

First Baptist Church is historically and traditionally an African American church and has had members who are of different ethnicities. The average tenure of a pastor at First Baptist is three to five years, and two out of the last four pastor's tenure were more than five, one seventeen years and the other ten years. Becoming the twentieth pastor and the first to be called as a native born from Lockhart new challenges and opportunities

confronted. College and a career provided an opportunity to go away to experience other parts of the United States before returning to serve. Pastor Grant emphasized in “Building Walls,” so do we seek to build a new worship facility. In his book *Navigating Pastoral Leadership in the Transition Zone*, D. Darrell Griffin says, “Successful ministry is about making the turn.”² We are making turns as we begin to navigate the pastoral leadership role and build new worship facility.

The mission of First Baptist Church is “Celebrating the past, changing the present, and creating future.” The staggering effects of traditional formats and outdated procedures due to the lack of leadership both pastoral and lay have caused a loss of identification along with ministry collapse and apathy. The pastor and congregation must understand the time of transformation transitions with leadership. Leighton says in his book, “Leadership always involves change, moving people from one point to another, from the old way of doing things to the new, from the security in the past to the insecurity of the future.”³ The rediscovery of purpose and mission knowing who we are, what we are to do, and how we are to do it is the greatest challenge of First Baptist.

The goal of the Doctor of Ministry project is to lead the church in reaffirming the identity of the 138-year-old congregation. The challenge in reaffirming identity is strengthening the confidence of congregants to develop community through the spiritual disciplines. The developed model will use the church’s history to reaffirm a congregational initiative designed to meet a community need in the City of Lockhart and the Neches Street community. There are many methods that applied to interpreting a

² D. Darrell Griffin, *Navigating Pastoral Leadership in the Transition Zone: “Arriving in the middle of the movie,”* (Chicago, IL, MMGI Books, 2012), 1.

³ Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus’ Way of Creating, Vision, Shaping Values, & Empowering Change*, (Downers Grove, IL, Intervarsity Press, 1991), 251.

text, but the method to be used is in the book by Fredrick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe in “Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap.”⁴ Their five-step method of 1) Locating the Readers and the Reading Context; 2) Encountering the Biblical Text: Read, Feel, Question, React; 3) A Close Reading of the Biblical Text; Steps in the Process; 4) Reading Contextually: Finding the Passage in Its Place; and 5) Engaging the Text, Other Readers, and Our Communities will serve as the main process for interpreting.

Nehemiah 2:11-18

The Old Testament selection is Nehemiah 2:11-20:

So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon’s Well and *on* to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire. Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool, but there was no place for my mount to pass. So I went up at night by the ravine and inspected the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials or the rest who did the work. Then I said to them, “You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.” I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me and also about the king’s words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, “Let us arise and build.” So they put their hands to the good *work*. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard *it*, they mocked us and despised us and said, “What is this thing you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” So I answered them and said to them, “The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem.”⁵

4 Fredrick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 7-8.

5 Nehemiah 2: 11 – 20 NASB. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this document are from the NASB.

The Doctor of Ministry project requires the selection of two passages of scripture, one Old Testament and a New Testament. These two passages will serve as the Biblical Foundations of this project. The Old Testament passage of Nehemiah 2:11-20 will serve as the focal passage for the project. The book of Ezra and Nehemiah often paired as one book giving an account of the history during the time of Persian rule. While the book of Ezra focuses more on the rebuilding of the temple, we have selected to glean more from Nehemiah for this Old Testament passage gives voice and motivation to the purpose and fulfillment of this project. Many of the references in both of these narratives speak in the first person, and the majority of the work in this project to be in the first person. Because of the written nature of this narrative, it will be examined more from a historical and not a literary context. Nehemiah serves as a catalyst for hearing, seeing, believing, and participating in God's program of redemption and restoration. He has become the present day voice and example of implementing building programs. The desire to see wholeness and God's glory restored has been the impetus for his memoir. The focus of this project is to restore the physical and spiritual walls of the church within the community. The church, representing God's power and presence, is a source where a community forms identity through godly relationships, fellowship among those who share same beliefs, and where their spiritual and social needs are satisfied. The beauty of restoration is those who were once in a state of apathy, disgrace, and Diaspora can now experience a revival and participate in forming God's community.

Beginning the Journey at Home

Glancing at the historicity of the book of Nehemiah it is often called a memoir, "Which suggests that it was written to pass on information to others, perhaps the Persian

government.”⁶ Normally the Old Testament passages provide an introduction for the reader of God’s word written through a particular individual. Nehemiah does provide us with a patriarchal introduction by sharing the name of his father, but he does not give us the traditional prophetic statement of a call or the word of the Lord coming to him. He only gives a definitive statement of time and place of beginning. He informs his readers these are his written words expressly provided for the Persian king and officials. Many of the Persian kings often noted their good deeds to their gods as a personal letter in the temples. This memoir is an official account to those Nehemiah was subject but also, “The primary response to Nehemiah’s memoir is he is writing a letter to God.”⁷ This narrative of his journey, leadership, and activities in the land of Jerusalem as his passion for God and community rebuild walls.

The book of Nehemiah gives us an assessment of the community, answered prayers for the community, benevolence toward community, and master plans for community.⁸ Nehemiah processed the community theologically, rather than empirically. He recognized God as the source for keeping things together and as the architect for restoring the walls. The narrative of Nehemiah unveils his burden for the distressed people who had escaped captivity, and the broken down walls and the gates burned with fire, and about Jerusalem. This burden is a personal and to be used as a transformative

6 James D G. Dunn, *Eerdmans Commentary On the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003), 320.

7 Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah, Old Testament Readings* (London: Routledge, 1998), 1, accessed January 26, 2016, <http://www.myilibrary.com?id=25451&ref=toc>.

8 Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992), 1.

agent in the work of God in building His kingdom, and at First Baptist Church in Lockhart, Texas. Nehemiah chapter 2:11-16 is a portion of our context, and there begins the actual assessment of the walls, announcement to the officials and leadership, and empowering of the people for the work of rebuilding the walls. He had arrived in Jerusalem and after three days begins his inspection of the wall in the most unusual fashion. He does not tell anyone, no one, the nature of his arrival nor the nightly inspection of the wall. After inspecting he calls all of them together and gives an exhorting and encouraging assessment of the condition within Jerusalem. The burden for God, people, and the restoration of the wall shared with Nehemiah for Lockhart, Texas. The distress of the people of the community suffering from identity crisis, and the broken down walls of the church building representing God's presence, and the burned gates of the hearts of men and women has placed a heavy burden to see God's glory restored at First Baptist.

A product of Lockhart, Texas and First Baptist is the church we attended from childhood through my college experience. Leaving for college in the fall of 1985 and was not preaching then, but four years later accepted the call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and was licensed by Pastor Theodore Boone. In 1990 with only a few hours to graduate he returned home from college, two years later from the return Pastor T.L. Garner ordained him. The memory of FBC's vitality and commitment showed how well the people prospered during those times. The early influences theological framework where the maternal grandmamma who taught us to pray and sing the old songs of Zion. A preacher's preacher, Pastor Rev. Earl Jackson Sr., would perform the baptism at the age of five, and stedfastly glean from him on the importance of preaching the Gospel.

There were deacons such as W.T. Bright and Homer Williams Sr. who cared for the needy and made sure the church building cared. The theological frame heavily influenced by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent Civil Rights movement. These experiences have helped to form and give the skills and ability needed to answer the call just like Nehemiah and Peter to lead the restoring of the God's community of people.

Encountering the Biblical Text: Read, Feel, Question, React

The narrative begins in chapter one through two giving the reader a personal account and perspective. We do know it was during the reign of Artaxerxes I in the winter capital city of Susa in Persia. The first chapter opens with a general description of Nehemiah's father, date, and placement. He serves as the Cupbearer to the Persian king. He has great concern for the Jews who had escaped and survived captivity in and around Jerusalem. The nature of his concern is not known. Nehemiah's questioning could be a general question on the surface and initially does not warrant any great impulse. The normative questioning in casual conversation could be, "How are things back home, and how are those who survived?" Why he desires clarity from his brother to give detailed information about the severe details back home is not for certain. One thing is for certain Nehemiah identified with the diaspora and had compassion and love for his homeland in captivity, and those besieged in Jerusalem. This identification leads to great association with this text: How is this text read and interpreted among those living in rural places that live in America and feel no association to the nation or larger urban areas? We live in a global society, and now many of the communities who were once able to sustain the beauty of the city depended upon those who would obtain a level of success and return

home to become a viable part of keeping the community vibrant. Now our young are going off to college and not even considering returning home. Many middle age adults have to transfer jobs due to the lack of employment or the shutting down of companies. These gateways provided an opportunity to a new world in the same way as Lot in Genesis 13:10-13, the transporting of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to Shinar, and Nehemiah himself. Not too many remain to continue to sustain the vibrancy of communities, especially in rural places. Many of the rural places are becoming distressed places because the young men and women are lured or moved away. The passion behind Nehemiah's love seen in this question raised to Hanai and some men of Judah.

This initial question posed, like normal human interaction, when we learn of someone revisiting their homeland regardless of the situation, storm-ravaged or relocation due to employment or deployment. Revisiting those familiar with the setting or place ask general questions. One does not expect any shocking information, "Things are good, or things are not that good, but it is going to get better." Due to the fact we cannot go back in time to visualize Nehemiah face to face. What we left with is to gather from the inference in Scripture of the breadth of the question and gain from his reaction to Hanani's and some men of Judah's response to his question. These men of Judah, including Hanani, arriving back from their journey certainly should have information as to the conditions of the homeland. The extent of their journey not shared in Scripture or any knowledge gain in research as to the why of their journey. One thing is for sure they were able to give a distinct summary to answer Nehemiah's question.

Nehemiah's reaction in verse 4 is an unexpected response to Hanani, Nehemiah's brother, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great

distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are buned with fire.”⁹ Hanani gives a response we can begin to visibly see in chapter one the possible response of Nehemiah in verse 4. The unfolding of this conversation reveals the uniqueness and form of writing Nehemiah impose upon his readers past and future. He uses the narrative form of writing and gives a personal account of the intent of his questioning. The response to the question receives quite an emotional uproar and sends Nehemiah into a physical and spiritual upheaval. He weeps and mourns for days; fasts and prays before the God of heaven. Now here are two entities, a city or urban center state, and man in the royal service of the king in crisis, who learns his homeland is in trouble, and the gates burned with fire, and the wall is broken down. The great concern of this man is similar to mine and many others who have a passion for their current or prior context, and the question looms what does it mean for a city not to have walls? Glen Loury, an African American leader, shared with his people the following applied reading of Nehemiah chapter one and two.

It’s a powerful metaphor, and closely related to black people’s situation today. A city without walls has no integrity, or structure; it is subject to the vagaries of any fad or fancy. Without walls, you are lost, as opposed to having some kind of internally derived sense of who you are to help you decide what you will and won’t do.¹⁰

Loury’s question resonates within and great ethos in his thoughts and exegesis of Nehemiah’s memoir. The African American community in Lockhart, like elsewhere in America, has faced great economic depravity and disparity in minority communities, black and Hispanic. The church, regardless of ethnicity, within these communities has to

9 NASB, Nehemiah 1:3.

10 Robert Boynton, “Loury’s Exodus,” *New Yorker*, May 1, 1995, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1995/05/01/lourys-exodus>.

face the threat of upheaval and destruction and rediscover what does it mean to have a wall or a church?

Nehemiah prays day and night to God for the children of Israel, and he inquires of God to hear and see the prayer of His servant. “His prayer, which is full of Deuteronomic expressions (*OTJC*² 427), acknowledges the sins of the Jewish people, but calls upon God to fulfil His promise in view of the repentance of the people, and to ‘grant his servant (Neh.) mercy before this man,’ *i.e.* the king (1:4–11).”¹¹ The narrative unveils the sin condition of the people and how they have not kept God’s commandments. The Bible reveals in the writings of the Major Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah the seriousness of the violation and God’s judgment upon the violators. Nehemiah stands in the gap for his people. There is some uniqueness to Nehemiah’s narrative unlike many other singular authored books within the Bible. He does not reveal a prophet or priestly call anywhere within his narrative, and yet he has a desire for God to intercede on his behalf and those who were praying the same prayer. He apparently desired to be used by God to bring about a change by starting at the end of chapter one that he was cupbearer to the king.

Nehemiah consumed with emotion over the condition of the walls and the desolation of his father’s homeland over a period was developing a strategic effort to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. How to accomplish the rebuilding project by approaching the king? He knows only King Artaxerxes can provide the approval and resources to allow such a task to come to pass. Some months have passed, and now he is before the

11 L. W. Batten, “NEHEMIAH,” ed. James Hastings et al., *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology* (New York, NY; Edinburgh: Charles Scribner’s Sons; T. & T. Clark, 1911–1912), 507.

king taking up the wine in his normal function. The king notices an unusual demeanor upon Nehemiah's face. He asks about his depressive look and Nehemiah responds sharing with the king the nature of his sadness, Jerusalem is desolate, and the gates consumed with fire. The King responds to him through inquiry, Nehemiah prays to God. Quick prayers are possible and valid if one has prayed sufficiently beforehand.¹² The king hears his requests and the details of the request and grants Nehemiah the time, treasure, and talent needed to fulfill the mission of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah arrives in within the boundaries of the Persian ruled territories and presents the letters from the king to the governors. One would assume the governors would cooperate since Nehemiah arrives with official signed and sealed documents with officers of the Persian army along with riders. Instead, they became suspicious and displeased with the thought and actions of someone having concern for the country Israel. Not just the city and its walls but for the entire country. When one is on a mission for God, there will always be opposition. Regardless of their attitude and action Nehemiah used wisdom and ingenuity in his assessment and worked on the wall. He told no one of what God had shared with him until it was time. Nehemiah proclaims his assessment and initiates his leadership of the project to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

He draws their attention, "Do you see how bad things are, the desolation, and the shame?" He continues by influencing them "Let us rebuild the walls," and in verse 18, "The hand of my God has been favorable, let us arise and build, and they put their hands to work." Let us get busy rebuilding the wall! There are always blessings, curses, and mocking is the work of the kingdom of God and to those involved in the fulfillment of

12 Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, electronic ed., vol. 10, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 175–176.

the work. As the devil deceived Eve in the garden with the misuse of language to confuse her, so does Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem raise their voices in deception. Nehemiah returns the words back to them and issues a statement, “You have no part in our prosperity, inheritance, and in the history of what will be written.” The beauty of this text is a great narrative to be read and written in the lives of all those who would give themselves to service for God and His kingdom. Will they see the importance and rebuild the wall?

Remembering Past and Other Experiences with the Text

The experience with this text is very limited. The encounters with this text have been in the traditional church school or worship settings when the preacher is focusing on a building project. The other is after hearing Dr. Frank Reid some years ago and purchased his book *The Nehemiah Plan*. Usually when capital campaigns are formed the one person’s name often used somewhere in the marketing or announcing of the campaign is Nehemiah. Also preached from Nehemiah chapter 1 for two Sundays and then chapter 2 for two Sundays and chapter 3 one Sunday. The attempts were to introduce oneself to Nehemiah as well as FBC. His name is almost synonymous with the church building, restoring, or capital campaign. There is a great similarity between names identifying with projects or places in the case of Peter in the New Testament passage.

Close Reading on the Biblical Text: Steps in the Process

The translation of the Nehemiah Memoir is a historiography. Upon translating it could pose difficulties in accepting its authenticity. Lester Grabbe points out a thought from H. G. M. Williamson on the obstacles in authenticity bearing light to the reworking of edits from Persians to a later Jewish, and Grabbe himself points out the nature of how Nehemiah uses only his perspective.¹³ Important to the translation of the entire narrative, especially the first couple of chapters understanding how or even why Nehemiah wrote in the first person. When we arrive in Nehemiah 2:11-20, we begin to understand the why and how of this narrative. The uniqueness of his assignment; the opposition from the three individuals and even some of the Jews; the assessment of the wall; the summary of devastation and proclamation of the rebuild, and the God-given nature of his mission. The variation is prose and mainly uses nuances or the different inclusion of a similar word. The New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB95), in chapters 1:3 and 2:17, uses two different to words to with the same meaning, “distress” and “bad situation.” The word “distress” found in the King James Version (KJV) but the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), and the New International Version “trouble” as the word of choice. The choosing of the translation is not as difficult as the literary and historical analysis of the chosen text. The other issues with the translation in this verse what is the NASB95 meaning of “Jerusalem is desolate and gates burned by fire?” The interpretation of the text given but a glance at the meaning of the words “desolate” and “burned by fire” give depth to the text. The word “desolate” is in the NASB95 and the An American Translation (AAT), and in the KJV, NRSV, RSV, and NIV the words are

¹³ Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah, Old Testament Readings* (London: Routledge, 1998), 155-156.

“lies in ruin.” These words are in the feminine tense and have a more docile tone allowing the narrative to be personal while speaking to all left in Jerusalem.

Identifying the Shape of the Text

The narrative of Nehemiah has often been paired with Ezra as these two were key figures during the Persian occupation. These narrations have not been favorable in the Hebraic Bible, but it does give us insight as to the establishing of religious life. Even though pairing the two books makes sense since each book has its individual relevance as to the recording of different events. The events of Nehemiah must stand alone and be read separately from Ezra or other minor renderings of individuals during those times. While Ezra shows up in Nehemiah chapter eight and nine our focus is not to explore or validate the pairing. We will discover from these narrations the burgeoning importance to the communities within the Bible. We discover a message of God’s faithfulness with His covenant community, and the community giving birth to Judaism and Christianity.¹⁴ Both of these memoirs give us a greater insight on how their individual tasks were crucial to the redevelopment of God’s community during horrid times. Noted, Nehemiah is a memoir to the king of Persia, Artaxerxes I. These accounts as noted were detailed and possibly altered over time but still giving us enough detail to assume its mission and purpose.

The portion of the narrative in chapter 2:11-20 places Nehemiah in Jerusalem three days and does not give us any further details of his interactions during those days. One may assume he rested from his long journey and possibly listened to or read any

¹⁴ Johanna W. H. Van Wijk-Bos, *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 3

documents giving insight to the mission at hand. The text is an introduction to his arrival and the process of how he intently carries out his mission. The shape of the passage gives us three transitional movements clarifying Nehemiah's intents and writing the narrative.

- Nehemiah Surveys the Walls (2:11–20)
- (1) The Secret Inspection by Night (2:11–16)
- (2) Nehemiah Presents the Challenge (2:17–18)
- (3) Opposition by Ridicule (2:19–20)¹⁵

The first section is (v.11-16) detailing the night mission and the secrecy of his actions in Jerusalem. The text presents two similarities in verses (12 and 16) of the secrecy of the mission and his actions. There are speculations in the narrative that could help us derive why he maintained silence, but the narrative never declares why. The second section is (v.17-18) when he gives the state of Jerusalem address and provides a physical and spiritual assessment of the gates, the sinful disgrace, and a charge to rebuild the wall. This particular verse (17) is an echo from (1:3), of Hanai's state of Jerusalem to him. Nehemiah was not a prophet, as was determined from chapter 1 through the current verse, but he has spiritual consciousness and a passion for God and loyalty to the nation, Jerusalem, in (1:4-11). Nehemiah upon sharing announces how the providential hand of God was favorable to him and the king to give his word of approval for the project. The people hearing these words are motivated and give assurance of dedication and become committed to the action of rebuilding the wall.

The final section (v.19-20) describes the opposition from Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab became so enraged after hearing the plans

¹⁵ Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, electronic ed., vol. 10, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 61.

Nehemiah for Jerusalem. While Nehemiah is a type of Jesus, who went about doing good, the good was not always to the satisfaction of those around Him. These three men, who were appointed non-Jewish leaders, did not agree with Nehemiah's mission and charged his efforts as a rebellion against the king. Opposition to the permission from the king and the mission of God is a major implication to be identified in this text. Nehemiah, in the midst of this opposition, unequivocally spoke truth to power and began to move forward with the mission. This portion of the narrative in (2:11-20) provides an understanding of the importance of the mission of rebuilding the wall and how leadership principles assisted in the assessment of the project, the motivating of people to join in the project and dealing with opposition to accomplish God's plan.

Comparing with Texts of Similar Material

There is not a text to compare this Nehemiah passage. The other similar passages in the book of Ezra present a similar mission and work allowed by the Persian kings. Both of these memoirs bear similarities with the return of exiles to Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding, one the temple and the wall. There has been a debate on whether during Nehemiah's mission were there any captives who returned with him to Jerusalem like in the book of Ezra. The evidence is not conclusive, but there are other similarities in how they began and accomplished their tasks. The main similarity is they both tell of a building project allowed by the Persian kings, they both depended upon the influenced workforce of those who returned and those residing in Jerusalem. Another similarity is how they both waited three days before they began their mission employing strategy (Ezra 8:32; Neh. 2:11), followed by encouraging the remnant to rebuild city and walls.

The other similarity is the opposition faced in the process of building each project. While in Ezra's accounts the work was halted due to such opposition and in Nehemiah he kept right on working in the midst of opposition. The narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah are similar, but even in their similarity, Nehemiah remains a complete work by itself.

Reading Contextually: Finding the Passage in Its Place

The memoirs of both Ezra and Nehemiah have been considered one book by some Old Testament scholars. "The books of Ezra and Nehemiah (originally a single literary work, hence Ezra-Nehemiah) deal with one of the more fascinating and until recently, little-known eras in ancient Israelite history."¹⁶ These two individuals cover a large span of events during the time of Persian rule and their permitted return to Jerusalem to restore temple and wall. Nehemiah, as noted previously, focused on the restoration of the wall, and his work is seen as separate from Ezra, although, Ezra's work is noted midway (Ch. 8) in the book of Nehemiah. Regardless of the various positions on whether they are a single or separate work, we will side on these memoirs are separate from each other written within the same age. This narrative and historiography provide a history for two nations, Persians, and Jews.

These two history gathers have not only provided information for the Persian king and government but the continuation of their kin then and future. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are similar due to their time of activity and writing, and it's supported to be written in the time Persian of captivity. Their literary style and genre are similar in nature although their content is not. According to Grabbe, "In many ways the book of

¹⁶ Thomas M. Bolin, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (Collegeville, MN Liturgical Press, 2012), 5.

Nehemiah represents a different but parallel story about the restoration.”¹⁷ The allowance for those who would read these documents, especially the Persian king or government, to fill in the minor or unspoken details. While many written narrative or historiographies are in the first person, it does not exempt the work from a literary analysis. The narrative has points where it appears to be fictive and leaves the readers imagination to fill in the details. “The writings of Ezra-Nehemiah were written in an age of prose, and books were God does not speak directly and where life is lived in the dailiness of placing stone upon stone.”¹⁸ We can see this as Nehemiah in our passage calls upon the people to take charge of their situation and become the main contributors to restoring their spiritual and physical identity, integrity, and the wall of protection around the city. The account of events within the chapter 2:11-20 passage gives us clear distinctive of Nehemiah’s narrative.

Locating the Social Context

The social context for the Old Testament pericope is not complex in its narrative form. The narrative written in such a way it describes the geographical locations within the chapters and passage used to lead up to the passage chosen. Nehemiah is very descriptive in detailing his social situation as to where he was at the beginning of chapter one and where he was in chapter two. There is no indication of this text drafted outside the realm of Nehemiah’s location. He was in the capital city of Susa in the beginning and journeyed to the broken down walls of Jerusalem. This narrative gives clarity to this

¹⁷ Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 67.

¹⁸ Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, *In An Age of Prose* (Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, 1988), 1.

position. Contextually within this narrative, there are other social themes within this narrative to be addressed.

The historicity of this narrative continues to remind us of words and certainly the extent of years of the physical devastation upon the city, region in and without Jerusalem. “These historical narratives are best regarded as didactic history, specifically directed to the context of judgment and dislocation experienced by the people of God.”¹⁹ The narrative focuses more upon the broken down wall of Jerusalem. The devastation was a result of the persistent invasions from Babylon to the current Persian territorial campaigns. The Persians, removed as many monarchies who conquered foreign lands, some of the natives to their homelands indoctrinated into another culture. Those who deemed with skill sets suitable were given positions within their captivity to support transference of culture and constitution to those held captive. There are examples such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah to name a few who were used in service to their oppressors. The Jews were dispersed between Persia and Judea many of them far from their homeland for years, and only a few were allowed or could afford to journey back and settle. They were an oppressed people removed from their homeland, and those who remained felt it even more by not being able to sustain their historic city of God. Due to the occupation, Jerusalem was distressed, broken, and spiritually demoralized, and people lack physical and spiritual identity. God had judged His people and their sin brought about the consequences of their rebellion against the will of God thus causing destruction, displacement, desolation, and disgrace personally and to

¹⁹ Effa, Allan. 2004. "Prophet, kings, servants, and lepers: a missiologial reading of an ancient drama." *Missiology* 32, no. 4: 465-473. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 26, 2015).

the nation as a whole. Nehemiah comes ready to be used to restore physical identity as it relates to the restoration of the wall but it also has a spiritual implication to the restoring of God's protection of the city and nation. The later chapters begin the true spiritual reformation of the community of God in the nation of Israel.

The book of Nehemiah and the contents within were written primarily to give an account of his permitted activities from Artaxerxes I who allowed his Cupbearer to return to his homeland, Jerusalem, to restore the wall. The books of Ezra-Nehemiah also provide an excellent example of the way in which Israel retold stories to address situations in the life of God's people.²⁰ The next account was for the Jews to remember God and His continued grace and mercy to them as His chosen people among all people. This was for all Jews, those in Persia and all who dispersed throughout the regions of the land during that time. The great social implication of the rebuilding of the wall is it provided news to all who were dispersed locally and geographically throughout that God's hand of favor had restored the walls of Jerusalem.

Lastly, this section of chapter 2:12-20 reflects the opposition Nehemiah faced from those who had established leadership and dominance within the desolated region. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were officials within the region of Jerusalem or Judea. Nehemiah notes in chapter 2:9-10 of his first interaction with these three upon entering the region. These men are the symbolic presence of evil in the region and to the rebuilding of the wall. Seen in this memoir as opposition to God's work of restoration in the land. These men of opposition were considered governors over the regions of Edom, Moab, and Arabia. They were the ones who continually held the oppression upon the

²⁰ Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 10.

remnant who were in and around Jerusalem. Furthermore, it is impossible to get ahead when there is a presence of horrendous evil preventing any acts of progression. The arrival of Nehemiah and the attitude of restoring God's presence in the rebuilding of wall and community bring two things 1) Persistent ridicule from the evil leaders in the region, and 2) Revival to those who were within the oppressive climate.

Engaging the Text, Other Readers, and Our Communities

There is a question in a quote from Glen Loury in Gordon Davies book on Ezra and Nehemiah asking, "What does it mean for a city not to have walls?" The book of Nehemiah addresses the question with a fresh perspective. "Nehemiah uses the voice of tradition to speak in the mode of both ethos and pathos shows the adaptability of interpreted tradition as a hermeneutic of changing realities."²¹ The question to be asked from this text is also one of functionality. Not only does Loury's question valid but a question like "What's the purpose or function of the wall?" "The function of a wall, and its role in the world of symbols is to defend from without and embrace from within."²² Cirlot gives us a good functional answer to the purpose of the wall by design. There is another formational question that rises in later chapters but has its beginnings in chapter 1 as well as the passage for interpretation 2:12-20. What does community look like? How does the wall not only function but how does it define? The focus of Nehemiah gives definition to the intended purpose of God for Israel to be His chosen regardless of their present crisis. The forming of identity has always been a crisis that plagues all oppressed

²¹ Davies, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 94.

²² Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. Jack Sage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) 343.

people regardless of the reason. Oppression can come in bilateral ways: one, some are oppressed due to sin or disobedience due to personal or corporate consequences; and two, due to evil being present in the world. God uses Nehemiah to be a liberator of an oppressed people in need of reformation.

The main character in this text is Nehemiah as it is the narrative of his journey and activities in Jerusalem. The other characters who play a major role in this text are the remnant of Israelites who remain in Jerusalem or Judea, and of course, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem who were the officials who scorned the work Nehemiah and the remnant were about to do. These characters play a major role in the development of not only this particular text but also the entire book of Nehemiah. This text tells the story of people who were in a forsaken land and how disgrace becomes a symbol of God's disapproval of their inability to restore the physical walls of His promise. Another point of emphasis is how opposition or oppressors play a role in abusing the people of God in doing the will of God. While opposition poses a threat the leader, confident in his skin, refutes the musings with a message of hope and restoration of God's promises to His people and for the entire land. Nehemiah, the central figure of narration, is not truly the center of this text or book. Nehemiah provides for us what is essential for all who read his memoir a reflection of what it means to serve God and make Him the focus.

In summary, the passage of Nehemiah 2:11-20 serves as a plan for congregations who are struggling in areas of leadership, restorative projects, identity, and dealing with opposition. Nehemiah has been a major reference for providing leadership in building projects for years. This Old Testament memoir provides for us more than leadership lessons for building projects, but it gives us perspective on how to discern the will of God

and follow through with doing His will. Nehemiah understood what it meant to be a community and the vital elements to make up the community of God. The assessments made to the wall, the secrecy of his activities, the confidence and ability to influence the dejected people to rebuild the wall, and ultimately assertively dealing with the opposition politically through spiritually voicing the will of God to those who oppose God.

Congregations and leaders who earnestly look into this passage gain insights to restore more than physical walls but the walls of the community. The passage gives an example of how First Baptist gains insight and principles to aid in restoring the identity and rebuilding walls to revive God's community in Lockhart, Texas.

Matthew 16:18

Locating the readers and the reading context

The New Testament selection is Matthew 16:18:

"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."²³

The New Testament pericope of Matthew 16:18 is a Christological distinction to the project speaking specifically to who gives identity to the church. The Gospel of Matthew is written from a narrative perspective as was Nehemiah, and both draw into understanding God's purpose. Many sought to compare Christ to those prophets who came before Him, "But Christ rejected those interpretations, although for most persons it would be an honor to be classed with God's prophets."²⁴ Peter, above all, identified Jesus

²³ NASB, Matthew 16:18.

²⁴ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI, The Zondervan Corporation, 1981), 248.

and His work. Jesus, therefore, blesses Peter and states, “Upon this rock I will build my church.”²⁵ This text serves as the first mention of Christ’s ecclesia, church, in the New Testament. The gathering together of those who would become His disciples and follow with sacrificial devotion His way and ultimately God’s will. Here begins the laying of a new identity for those who believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ, ecclesia “The Church.”

The Nehemiah objective was one fulfilling God’s promise to Israel in restoring the wall as a source of identity. The restoration of First Baptist Church is similar to both of these texts as the framework of fulfilling the promise of God to build the wall of a fractured community back into its determined purpose. Looking into all three of these communities at different times and seasons gives glances of the social context, and we discover similarities in all three. Nehemiah introduced God into the equation of a destroyed wall and disgraced Jerusalem. Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ in the midst of Roman occupation and cultural depravity and Israelite rejection of Jesus, and Pastor Williams preaches and teaches through leading the First Baptist Church out of the distressed community and devastated building in need of rebuilding to discover who the church will be upon the return.

Beginning the Journey at Home

The Old Testament “Beginning the Journey at Home” will give a further explanation in this particular section as well. As pastor and product of First Baptist Church of Lockhart, Texas 514 Neches Street God is leading to rebuilding a facility

²⁵ Matthew 16:18.

whose identity has lost its luster and a congregation who has been devastated by years of neglect that has turned into apathy.

Encountering the Biblical Text: Read, Feel, Question, React

The Ecclesia, gathering, or church are those who receive revelation from God and are willing to proclaim faith in Jesus Christ and become citizens of God's kingdom by living out their lives in the community. The Gospel of Matthew in chapter 16 describes how the Pharisees and Sadducees were testing Jesus asking him for a sign from heaven. The growing unrest from the religious leaders probing and challenging the authenticity of Jesus as the Messiah was ongoing. As to say Jesus was tested daily by the supreme adversary, Satan, as well as those who disbelieved in the incarnate one, Jesus Christ. Here we continue in Matthew's narrative of Jesus' mission in telling his disciples to beware of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees for they desire signs and seek personal gain. The text moves into the district of Caesarea Philippi, and Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that 'the Son of Man is?'" The disciples begin to say what others are saying, "John the Baptist; others say Elijah, but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." It is always easy to say what others are saying because it requires nothing from the person saying other than truth or gossip. When in subservient leadership and following someone who is like Jesus, a pastor, or CEO, it is good to know what those being giving service to are saying. Major corporations or companies poll their customer as to how their product or company leadership is providing a quality product or services to the desired receivers. The polls are to reflect if the projected targets met the goal, and if the aim is not near the intended target changes are made. Jesus, unlike companies or

corporations, has a different projection in mind. He is digging deeper into the heart of His followers to see if they have gained a more important truth of God's aim, Jesus Christ.

Jesus now asks another more directed question, not "who do others say," here it is "But who do you say that I am?" Jesus referring to self urges the disciples to confess their personal affirmations of Him. Up until this point, the disciples have followed Jesus with commitment but now further along in their journey with Jesus the challenge of growth and true faithful following calls for authentic acknowledgment. Will one go all the way and carry the burden of His call in them, ultimately establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Simon Peter, who perceived as out of order, receives something, according to the narrative, from above and makes a kingdom declaration of Jesus' Messiahship and Him being God's son. Most spectacular of all are Matthew's teaching that Jesus is the "Son of the living God" (16:16), and nothing could prepare us to embrace the full mystery of the man from Nazareth, who is nothing less than God-with-us (Matt. 1:23).²⁶ Jesus affirms Peter's declaration with a blessing, and what a major declaration it is, and it would become the bedrock for all confessions then and in the future of the church. Peter's confession of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was conceived supernaturally, and not through knowledge from books. The true revelation comes from the Father in heaven! The wonder and a true sign of a miracle lie in the revelation from the Father in heaven through the mouth of man, Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God.

The confession of Peter now reveals to us God's plan through Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom through not only the bedrock of confessions to come like Peters

²⁶ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2010), 25.

but also the beginning of a domain called the ecclesia. Matthews' new word, ecclesia meaning gathering, introduced a framework for Jesus' followers. This term far from their concept of kingdom or monarchy they had been expecting. They were expecting a physical takeover using war, an assembly or army, to restore Jewish identity. God's ways are not ours, and His ways of doing things are way above ours, and His kingdom ideal is spiritual. Peter I will establish my domain by the gathering of souls to do my work, and nothing in Hades will be able to take it over. The revelation of God through Peter, and like Nehemiah, has allowed us to see the heart of a leader. Authentic spiritual leadership hears the voice of God and knows the heart of God. Leaders must be able to acknowledge who He is and know how He plans to fulfill His will in the lives of those who chose to be called by His name. The true authentic followers will gather to form a framework for rebuilding spiritual walls. The walls of the church grow as we gather those who confess Him to be faithful followers of the Son of God.

Remembering Past and Other Experiences with the Text

The Apostle Peter is an unusual character within the Gospels for those who have devoted great study of the Bible. Peter often villainized for his inabilities to display character becoming of whom we see standing boldly in Acts 2. Peter receives a bad rap many times for what is a faith by trial. While many sit at on the other side of the table and say, "I would not have been so imprudent or so boisterous." As one reads the Bible, no one has walked with Jesus and not gone through some trail and failed or opened our mouth when we should have stayed silent. Peter is a character who should receive

commendation for his continued leaps of faith that provide courage for all to follow.

Peter was a faithful follower of Jesus and the church and synonymous with leadership.

The encounter with this text is very familiar with the traditional church school and worship settings, but Jesus introduces us to a brand new concept of terminology and setting. Previous encounters with this text never caused a focus on the establishment of the church here. The *ecclesia*, the gathering, or the church would now be the term used to identify those who were to carry God's promises. While this verse is popular, it is often part of several verses giving a reflection on the fact of Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah. Peter was correct, but often the confession is only a small piece of the larger, even as we note in the changing of Peter to Petra. A distinction between "Peter" and "this rock" is also often affirmed by the two different Greek words, but grammar requires this variation because the ending of *petra* ("Rock") is feminine and could not be used for a man's name.²⁷ The Sunday school lesson reviews would always garner responses from even the quietest of students when it would come to discussing the interpretation from Peter to Petra. Reflections upon these two texts give a better understanding of the narratives and a clearer understanding of the plan of God, the roles of the individuals, the social history of the people, the assessment of disaster, the religious life, and the relationships between people. This text is a reassuring of God's confirmation upon Peter's and our confession of what will be our identity. The wall of promise, protection, and provision for First Baptist Church of Lockhart and the gates of Hell will never conquer God's promises.

27 Craig Blomberg, Matthew, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary*, 252.

A Close Reading on the Biblical Text: Steps in the Process

The translation of this passage in the Gospel of Matthew is similar to translation to the other synoptic gospels of Mark and Luke. The gospel of John has a similar rendering but not often included as part of the great Petrine confession or Jesus' establishment of the church. While found in the other two synoptic gospels, Matthew is the only one who decided to include it as a teaching narrative of Jesus. Matthews translation of Marks' Gospel decides to expound upon the account and prepares greater insight into what Jesus not only affirms in Peter but also acknowledges his and the other disciple's involvement in the future. The synoptic writers, all four, have mentioned this great event in the translating the confession and statement of the church. Matthew is the only writer who provides further detail unlike Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21; and John 6:66-71 is different from the other synoptic writers. While the focus upon Matthew is verse 18, those verses surrounding support to this project, but this one verse 18 is the key.

The translation of this passage outlined in three ways: One is Matthew 16:13-20; second, Matthew 16:17-19; and third, Matthew 16:18-21. How do we translate the meaning of Peter's name post revelatory confession from Petros to petra? Jesus' declaration, "You are Peter," parallels Peter's confession, "You are the Christ," as if to say, "Since you can tell me who I am, I will tell you who you are."²⁸ The NASB, NLT, ESV, RSV and NRSV states "You are Peter," but the TEV says, "Peter: you are a rock and on this rock foundation." The work of many theological scholars has pierced into the defining of Peter's name and what was meant by Jesus when He declares him a little rock. There are those who have drawn from the deep well of interpretation and could

²⁸ Craig Blomberg, Matthew, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 251–252.

continue to unlock barred doors of fatal interpretation. “The RSV’s footnotes indicate, there is a word play in Greek between Peter (Greek *Petros*) and rock (Greek *petra*).

Although the word play is clear enough in Greek, it would have been even more obvious in Aramaic, the language which Jesus spoke.”²⁹ The translation noted by interpreters the Greek *Petros* and *petra* are in masculine and feminine form. It is also noted by the same that the Aramaic, the primary language during the time of Jesus, does not give us the word play as in the Greek. The translation turmoil is not easy, but the text is clear, and Peter defined as the rock, and his revelation is the foundation of the churches authenticity. The last question of translation, how is “the church” properly translated? “Nowhere else in the Gospels does Jesus speak of founding a church. The very word *ekklesia*, ‘church,’ does not occur anywhere else in the Gospels, except for Matthew 18:17, which itself suspect, and uses the word in a different sense.”³⁰ Craig Bloomberg provides a broader definition of *ekklēsia*:

Moreover, the word *ekklēsia* in Hellenistic Greek often simply meant *an assembly*, as is also true of the underlying Aramaic *qāhāl*—a gathering of people for a particular purpose. In the Old Testament these gatherings normally involved the Israelites at worship, so that precisely such a community surrounding the Messiah had become a standard Jewish expectation. Jesus, however, implies nothing here of any particular church structure or government; he merely promises that he will establish a gathered community of his followers and help them to grow.³¹

²⁹ Barclay M. Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook on The Gospel of Matthew*, (New York, NY, Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1988), 538.

³⁰ Frances Wright Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (San Francisco, Cambridge, Hagerstown, New York, Philadelphia, London, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Sydney: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 353.

³¹ Craig Blomberg, Matthew, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 252–253.

The Jews ideal was brick and mortar, but Jesus' coming church would not be a community necessarily housed within walls but become a gathering of people not constrained by walls and who would be identified, authentically, by their confession of He is, the Messiah, the Son of God. This new institution becomes the house for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit later on in the epistles.

Identifying the Shape of the Text

The structure of Matthew 16:17-19 is different from Mark and Luke's accounts or introduction of this passage. Matthew's narrative explains itself, as we will discuss in the next section, as we compare with similar texts. The structure of this passage begins first with verse 13-15; secondly, verse 16; thirdly verses 17-19, and finally verse 20. Other views of the shape of this text have it structured as verses 13-16 and then verses 17-20. Regardless of the shaping of this text verses 17-19 is the focus in this . These verses provide an explanation of what preceded in verses 13-16. While this passage begins with the transition and a question in verse 13, it does not appear Jesus is asking an indirect question centered away from the disciples. Within the other two afore mention gospel writers, we have here a question of acknowledgment upon those who followed Jesus daily, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" Then Jesus follows with a direct question, "Who do you say that I am?" The entire region had declarations as well as the disciples, but here Peter proclaims "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Peter's confession, according to Jesus, was revealed unto him not by sources of related to humanity, but from God up above who had illuminated Peter's, somewhat inconsistent mental ability, to be able to declare Jesus as the Christ. "The messianic confession is not

due to idle human speculation (as in 12:23) but to divine disclosure. God has chosen this one man to be the honored recipient of the fundamental revelation of who Jesus is.”³²

The significance of the mind and mission of Jesus can be seen in verse 18, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” The church, a gathering, of all those who like Peter have received the revelation from God, by the Holy Spirit, upon Jesus’ ascension. The confession of all to part of this new community will be the adhesive to keep it together. If the Peters confession is key, then this verse also provides a demonstration of Peter’s role and shows inclusivity in the future of Jesus’ mission to establish the church. Peter’s role will be a significant role in the founding of Jesus’ new community regardless of the events that would transpire after his confession. This new community, unlike the declining Jewish national identity, would not succumb to death, or the oppressive powers of any human-made government nor would Satan be able to prevail against it.

Comparing with Texts of Similar Material

This narrative from Matthew finds its comparison in other synoptic Gospel texts as mentioned previously in the preparing translation section. Matthew’s pericope is much broader in explanation of the events than the other Gospel writers. Mark and Luke give us Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah or Son of God and then quickly share Jesus forbidding them to tell anyone. The just of their interpretation of the event. Matthew provides more and seems to be for Peter as the central figure of Jesus’ new community in the future. Matthew is the only one even to share references to the “gates of Hade or Sheol, ” and also found in the Old Testament, Job 38:17 or Isaiah 38:10, but

³² Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew: Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching*, (Louisville, KY, John Knox Press, 1993), 189.

none other comparisons made. Likewise, he describes for us verse 19 in the provision of power and access.

Reading Contextually: Finding the Passage in Its Place

According to M. Eugene Boring, “The Gospel of Matthew, like all New Testament Gospels, was composed as a literary work to interpret the *theological* meaning of a concrete *historical* event to people in a particular historical location.”³³ This Gospel of Matthew is a narrative of identity. It identifies Jesus as the Promised One to come and His soon coming new church. It is the key to gaining knowledge, Divine knowledge from God the Father and confessing to being part of His plan and promise. Matthew sets us up to view how God through Peter becomes the foundational rock for the establishment of His future kingdom here on earth. Peter’s confession becomes a marker for his future role within this kingdom.

Locating the Social Context

The social context of this passage in the Gospel of Matthew is during a volatile period in the life of Jesus and His followers. He was rejected not only by the Jewish leaders and religious leaders, Pharisees and Sadducees but from many of the Jews who were devoted national identity over the imposing Roman rule. Their ideal Messiah was one who would restore National identity and prosperity back to the Jews. Their social expectation of the One to come was not a babe in the manger nor a humble carpenter’s kid who now a man is declaring union with the Father and performing liberating signs and wonders. The context for this passage places them in Caesarea Philippi a territory

³³ Leander E. Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Matthew - Mark* (Volume 8) (Valley Forge, PA: Abingdon Press, 1995), 89.

primarily filled with Greeks and Syrians. Once again although Mark and Luke share the beginning of their entrance into this region, only Matthew gives us further detail into the exchange between Jesus and Peter. There is speculation from scholars of Jesus remaining in this region for being aware of Herod's hostility toward John the Baptist and followers. The texts within the synoptic Gospels provide us not great detail. Jesus, apparently, knowing of the speculation and rejection among the Jews and many who followed used this time to question His faithful followers. Why not? He had sent them out two by two to preach and use their authority, and they have witnessed healing of the blind and lame, and even seen the blessing of two fish and five loaves of bread, so "Who do men say that I am, and who do you say I am?" The ongoing struggle of identifying authentic disciples is by those who will receive the Divine revelation and confess like Peter, "You are the Christ, Son of the Living God."

Engaging the Text, Other Readers, and Our Communities

The Gospel of Matthew sets the tone as the first of the synoptic Gospels in the New Testament. The authors Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri provide for us a fresh perspective upon the Gospel of Matthew:

"Matthew's Gospel should lead us to appreciate the spiritual heritage that Jews and Christians share in common. Most of all, to affirm the messiahship of Jesus is to affirm the messianic hope that was nourished for centuries among the chosen people. In this respect, the faith of Israel has become the faith of the Church now centered on the Jewish man from Nazareth."³⁴

How do we, as Christians, in the age of the church begin to appreciate the identity we have in Christ? The driving question within this project is we have lost a sense of

³⁴ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Grand Rapids, MI Baker Academic, 2010), 28.

identity due to all the cultural ideologies and ism's that have created a separation of identity. The continued battle the Apostle Paul describes for us in Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the power, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly places."³⁵ [NASB] I, as Jesus proclaims in Matthew 16:18, that no power can destroy the heritage of Jesus was establishing through Peter and the rest of the disciples who would confess Him as the Messiah. The church must strive to maintain and stand upon the rock of its Divine revelation of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The growing trend within the American religious or Christian culture, regardless of ethnicity, frightens. It appears to be a move away from identity in Him and more of a promotion of self-reality based upon individual accomplishment and self-promoted service toward moral practices. The move is away from the Divine revelation of self-realization, like Peter, in confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to know who one is. The struggle is not so much within this passage as it is within the culture of then and now. The continued challenge for the Black rural church and all churches is the revaluing of our identity as Christ's ecclesia, church. May the question be, "Is our confession authentic? Standing in the same shoes as Jesus, while difficult and impossible to fill, the question attached is, "How does one know if one's confession is authentic? Has God, the Father, revealed His Son Jesus Christ to those who posture themselves as one who knows? The struggle continues for no one truly knows if one's confession is authentic, but Christ. He knew Peter's was authentic and declared blessings upon him and established his role in the future of what was to come.

³⁵ NASB, Ephesians 6:12.

The role of Peter is complicated amongst scholars and appears role not clearly defined as to his function in the future. While some say, it is apparent how Peter became a spokesman for the church in Acts. Luke shares Peter was the first to speak after the Pentecost experience when tongues of fire shown upon their heads and many bystanders there declaring strange drunken behavior during the working hours of the day. Peter speaks out, and over 3,000 souls were added to the church that day. Luke's placement and the role of Peter in Acts serve the purpose of effectively revealing his role in the forming of the new movement in Acts. Is there sufficient evidence to give Peter the established role of leader? Does Jesus make a clear, definitive statement of Peter being the rock He would found the ecclesia? We have shared the play on words in the Aramaic and the Greek languages of Peter's name meaning "Rock" and Jesus saying, "Upon this rock." We could side with some and say it is clear Jesus meant he was to be the foundation rock, person, to be used to initialize the church. The other point pressed from a Catholic perspective; Peter is the founder and Christ used him in the role to establish and administer. It is easy to embroil in the Petrine role. Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. provides an agreeable viewpoint he says, "It is important that twenty-five years after his death Peter retained at least a historical importance. There is beyond this speculation. However, within the community Peter may have functioned as the founding apostle or patron saint."³⁶ Regardless of how to determine a clear interpretive path to the debate of a true Petrine role, the determined purpose is he serves a vital role of leadership in the founding of the church.

36 Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2007), 251.

We as present day disciples must allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the Authentic Christ. Our future depends upon our confession of Him as the One true and living God incarnate who redeemed our lost souls. We, as disciples, must embrace the same role of leadership in keeping the church alive despite the threats from hell and the servants of hell. The power has been given to us to continue the work, and God's will done.

Conclusion

Matthew, like Nehemiah, has an ideal for rebuilding the desolate and disgraced community of God. Matthew provides for this pericope and projects a dynamic that speaks to reassessment and rebuilding a lost and hopeless community. Like Matthew and Nehemiah, have a hope of reshaping identity and rebuilding the framework of what it means to be the community of God. Within the context, we have assessed a rural community of believers, spiritually trampled by leaders who see their role as pastor/preacher and nothing beyond to inspire or re-establish a sense of Divine purpose. First Baptist has had many great pastoral leaders who were able to establish a sense of pride and were able to build or repair the church walls physically. While successful, many of those same leaders left with only serving 3-5 years and then the people's hope diminished. The Matthew passage serves as a catalyst to reignite the passion for identifying with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

The goal of this DMin project is to focus on rebuilding the identity of a people who have somehow strayed from being a collective body of believers with a purpose. First Baptist has a rich heritage of being a church within the community and giving great

service but it has waned due to lack of sustained leadership and flight to more established living in different parts of the city. The threat of existence dwells upon those who are part of FBC to adhere to their confession and call to become part of the authentic church. The walls of FBC can be rebuilt and identity reframed if we see the defined role Christ has prepared for each one.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Episcopal structures are important for aligning churches under the same systems of beliefs and practices. Those elected individually or to a governing body make decisions which impact the local assembly. Decisions by the pope will affect how Catholics all over the world will practice their faith and what they believe. The governing bodies within the Methodist Church and other such bodies will make decisions which have a similar impact. However, one of the governing principles with the Baptist church is “every Baptist church is autonomous” which means every church is “a sovereign entity within itself.” Every local Baptist church can determine its practices, its beliefs, its worship, and its polity.

While the relationship between the local church and national governing body is clearly defined in denominations which have an episcopal structure, every Baptist church has a tacit relationship with its National Convention. The nature of the relationship with the District Association, the State Convention and the National Convention is generally dependent upon the pastor and the previous involvement of church members. The membership within the National Baptist Convention fluctuates over time because of pastor and churches choosing not to align with the convention. In addition, the convention has split on several occasions. The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

has given birth to three conventions: the National Baptist Convention of America, International, Inc., The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., and the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International. Each split represents a demonstration of what it means for the church to be autonomous, to be authentically Baptist.

The First Baptist Church of Lockhart, Texas is the first African American church founded in 1877. The early beginnings were on the northwest side of town then the gathering was moved to the current location on the eastside. The history of FBC is not detailed due to loss of records, changes in leadership, and what was retained from deceased member Bettie Manor who died in the 1980s. There is not any in depth information on, the Rev. J.H. Carter and members, who founded FBC, and the current information only states they founded and moved the church to its current location.

Lemony Snicket once wrote, ““Those unable to catalog the past are doomed to repeat it,”¹ FBC is on the path of repeating its history and not being able to script a brighter future due to apathy. The mission of FBC is “We are celebrating the past, we are changing the present, and we are creating future possibilities.” The mission statement helps FBC to appreciate the rich Christian heritage of FBC, and allows members and those who attend to trust Jesus Christ to change their lives, and to accept the challenge of creating new possibilities thru learning, teaching, and sharing God’s word. The church will then apply the principles of God’s word by praying, loving, and serving their community. The eastside community of Lockhart was once primarily African American but still has a rich history. The eastside community was primarily a slave community known as “Freedmanville” which served a space for many of the freed slaves in the area. Texas happened to be, one

¹ goodreads.com, accessed February 25, 2015, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/doomed-to-repeat-it>.

of the last slave states to receive news of the Emancipation Proclamation. In later years Freedmanville dissolved and became primarily a community of African Americans. This is where FBC resides, and like many African American and Hispanic American communities, it's poor and economically disadvantaged. The African American presence has greatly declined within the eastside community, and most of FBC's members live in other areas of Lockhart. The east side of Lockhart has a high renter population and the property owners, who once lived on the property, are becoming "Slum lords" and have no concern for the residents or a sense of pride in maintaining the property.

The physical structure of the church has taken on the mask of the changing community. The church now resembles the community and slum lord housing around it. Although suffering from physical neglect it suffers from leadership neglect as well. Some of the neglect of structure has been due to short termed pastorates and the apathy of leader and members who do not have an appreciation for the churches history and people. According to Dennis Bickers, "Only a long-term pastorate allows us the opportunity to understand the church and why it does the things it does."² During the church's history there were rebuilding, restorative, and addition projects by several pastors. There have been architectural designs for a new facility over the past 15 years but no progressive movement to begin a building project. The last three pastors envisioned greater and sensed a need for change to elevate the beauty and mindset of not only the members but the entire community.

Lockhart is a small town in Texas with a population under 20,000, geographically in Caldwell County, and is the county seat and the larger of two towns in the county. The

² Dennis Bickers, *The Healthy Small Church-Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues*, (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 104.

town remains rural in nature although it is adjacent to Travis County where the capital city of Austin, Texas is about 30 miles to the north. The counties surrounding Lockhart are experiencing tremendous growth but Caldwell County is still awaiting its economic and population boom. The town is currently a space for a growing commuter population traveling to Austin in the north and San Marcos and San Antonio to the west for jobs and higher education. The cost of living is less than living in Austin to the North and many residents with median to higher paying jobs choose to live in Lockhart and drive in to Austin and surrounding areas. Those who are lower income usually move to San Marcos or lower income areas of Austin until they can gain a higher wage. The town will eventually increase in all areas as change becomes inevitable. The demographics are 73% white or Anglo, 51% Hispanic, and 9% African American, .4% Asian, .8% American Indian.

Due to the current facility of First Baptist Church loss of insurability and the instability of its worship facility the church has agreed to undergo a renovation project. There have been relationships gained that allow us time in two areas: Time to raise financial resources; and time to worship at a different rented facility. The First Presbyterian Church in Lockhart, and their pastor, opened up their doors for First Baptist Church to be able to worship at their facility. The initial thought was to have separate worship services at different times, and then the pastors and leaders, from both congregations, agreed to try worshipping together until First Baptist Church's renovation project was completed. This allows First Baptist Church to save finances and be in a structurally stable facility, and to experience fellowship with another church. This unique view of community is rarely experienced in traditional churches today. Society and

statistics deem Sunday morning within the sanctuary's across America as the most segregated time in our nation but not at First Presbyterian Church. During this renovation period walls have been torn down, and now that they are down let the rebuilding of church walls begin to restore identity and hope within the Lockhart community.

The book of Nehemiah gives the reader a narration of his inspiration to return to his homeland and rebuild the walls that had been burned by fire, destroyed. Nehemiah is a prototype for pastors or leaders to find inspiration in God, community, principle, and practice. He did not have a traditional call or spiritual incantation, as many of the prophets and servants, but what he did have was the purpose, passion, prayer, and practice. These were motivators for him, and likewise for the process at FBC to restore the promise of God by rebuilding the wall. The goal of this project is to provide "A Holistic Approach to Rebuilding Rural Walls within a Rural Church." Gordon F. Davies in his work on Ezra and Nehemiah shares an application from Glen Loury:

"Glen Loury, an African American leader, has applied a reading of Nehemiah 1-2 to his people. What does it really mean for a city not to have walls? He asks. It's a powerful metaphor, and closely related to black people's situation today. A city without walls has not integrity, or structure; it is subject to the vagaries of any fad or fancy. Without walls, you are lost, as opposed to having some kind of internally derived sense of who you are to help you decide what you will and won't do."³

The traditional church today consists of walls, brick, and mortar, wood or steel. The importance of the physical structure of the temple, then, and the church now is framed by walls made of physical materials. The wall of Jerusalem was God's provision and the promise of protection for His chosen people, Israel. The wall also served as a divider to

³ Gordon F. Davies, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 94.

separate Israel from the other nations. The wall of Jerusalem was a source of identification for all Jews to come and be under the protection of their God. Nehemiah's account in chapter 2:11-17, gives the first steps upon arriving in Jerusalem and he begins by privately or secretly assessing the ruin and destruction. Nehemiah spends three days on a reconnaissance mission. He had heard of the devastation, and now he can observe for himself. Upon finishing his assessment, he lifts his voice to encourage the people with the word of God. Nehemiah writes, *"Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me, as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me"*(2: 18). The message from God and supported by the king was for the community to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The destruction of the city did have a psychological and emotional impact on the people. Here were the people of Jehovah, the true and living God and they have been invaded and defeated by an outside army. Their city, the city of God, lies in ruins. The destruction of the city represented the shame and remorse of the people. When Nehemiah probes as to the condition of the city, the report was given, *"The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken and the gates are thereof are burned with fire"*(1: 4). Condition of the people represents the plight of First Baptist Church before the intervention of Nehemiah. The people of God have a building not suitable for worship. Like Jerusalem, the people of God see themselves in light of the condition of the building.

The information comprised within this chapter comes from four major sources within white and black Baptists. These sources are helpful in discovering the heritage of the Baptist denomination and formation into its conventions. The information within this

chapter will provide insight into the autonomy, identity, leadership, and support of the formative movement of the National Baptist Convention. The researcher will discuss within the next section the development of Black churches into a national convention. The researcher will connect the identity of the Black church and provide understanding of such development to help First Baptist Church in Lockhart gain a greater perspective of her identity as a Black Baptist church.

The Formation of the Black Church into National Baptist Convention

The walls of America, like Jerusalem, were burned down and left desolate due to the Civil War. A nation at war, the north, and south, with itself over many issues of unity and the disapproval of an inhumane industry called slavery. The hope of a nation split over issues of humanity with spiritual ties to man and the God he serves. The American South had been devastated, and the nation became fractured during the years from 1861-1865. The walls of America were down, and the unity of a nation had been divided North and South, over capitalism and the immoral and unjustifiable system of bondage called "Slavery." This system of oppression forced many captured Africans to be transported from their country to new lands on distant shores called America. The suppression of was so gruesome it would force inhuman brutality and psycho-social abandonment. Although, many lost at sea during the transport to America, those who made it was sold on auction blocks like animals and forced into the rigors of enslavement and unbearable living conditions. The highlighting of the horrors of American Slavery are only the beginnings of the travesty visited upon the Africans who were stolen and sold into such unknown brutality to come. The designation of being three-fifths of a person, even though this was a political designation to prevent slaveholders an

opportunity of control, was unfair. The demeaning process would force the slaves into a psychological enslavement by forcing them to obey the owner or master, forced labor, forced inferiority, forced humiliation, forced division of community and family, and forced color class system where the darker were, the more subhuman traits supposedly one possessed. Na'im Akbar says, "The process of human slavery is ultimately a psychological process by which the mind of a people is gradually brought under the control of their captors and they become imprisoned by the loss of the consciousness (awareness) of themselves."⁴ The Africans were spiritual, the builders and inventors of early civilization and now their sons and daughters have been forcefully and maliciously taken from their homeland to be enslaved and endure years of oppression and dehumanization.

The African people struggled due to separation from their homeland; forced into slavery, and communicating with the white oppressors, and other slaves from different parts of Africa. The greatest evil served upon the African slaves by their white European oppressors was the demonization of great people who were undeserving of such brutality. They had domiciles, families, and institutions of prosperity, lives, spirituality, and a God whom they worshiped. The slave owners used systems and mechanisms known and unknown to decimate their preservation. Ultimately forcing them to attempt a resurrection of all they knew only to be inhibited from new life in a new world. If any insurrection or attempt thereof the slave owner would use brutal methods to force compliance to the system, they were beat with whips, hung, dogs unleashed upon them, and they were forced to endure harsh conditions as a means of punishment. They became

⁴ Na'im Akbar, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery*, (Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions & Associates, 1996), 31.

encapsulated into a culture that taught good was bad, love could be hate, and to be a slave meant full obedience under oppressive masters with no freedom of choice. “The black Christians who formed historic black churches also knew implicitly that their understanding of Christianity, which was premised on the rock of antiracial discrimination, was more authentic than the Christianity practiced in white churches.”⁵ The system of slavery also became a religious system of oppression by misconstruing the Holy Scriptures. The African heritage is a rich heritage of belief in the God of the universe, and like many natives of different lands, the African knowledge of God often displayed in their daily practices. While the white oppressors deemed the captive Africans as slaves as savages, they were far from being such. They were an intelligent, industrious, and inspirational people who relied upon the God of the universe to redeem the time and restore unto them the joy of return to their homeland. They never gave up hope in their God, and they continued to practice and incorporate their practice of worship when permitted.

Christianity and the African slave conversion to it would begin to reveal this heritage in their forms. The white slave masters still taught slaves of a God who loved them and sent His Son for the salvation of all men, but vainly expected a slave to be obedient to the slave owner regardless of the conditions. Durkheim wrote, “Individuals who make up a social group and feel bound to one another because of their common beliefs. Belief, as he argued, was not a matter of opinion or private religious experience,

⁵ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1990), 4.

but "belongs to the group and unites it."⁶ The slave masters would hold church services, and the slaves would be forced to attend and remain silent and seated in the back of the church or worship area. The slaves already considered to be less than human were believed not to be able to comprehend the religious concept.

“It is clear, however, that large numbers of slaves were converted to Christianity, particularly during the awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those conversions had a powerful influence on the nature of religious experience among Africans in the American colonies. The Baptist movement thrived among these converts, who organized churches and denominations.”⁷

Many of the slave owners belonged to Christian denominations who supported slavery and were encouraged the teaching of systematic religious oppression. The Abolitionists’ would be responsible for raising the consciousness within the denominations of the white church, both in England and America. The abolitionist movement was occurring and supporting slave liberation by other means, another movement of unspoken liberation from white churches was occurring among the black Baptists. The growing separation, due to inequality in following the basic principles the whites were preaching and teaching, fertilized a move of separation from the white church to give birth to black churches.

Leroy Fitts gives an excellent observation in this statement:

“From these strong psychological and spiritual motivations were early black Baptists anxious to be delivered-both slave and free blacks. Separate churches could not have been born during slavery if nobody had become dissatisfied with their religious experiences in white churches. The nature of this dissatisfaction may be seen in the necessary response of a Christian conscience to its own enslavement. Central to any independent movement is the prior emergence of free thought.”⁸

⁶ the Guardian, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2012/dec/10/emile-durkheim-analysis-of-moral-life>.

⁷ Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways A History*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 263.

⁸ Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985), 44.

The separation would develop a framework for a new autonomy, identity, humanity, and a freeness to worship in their distinct way. Many black churches still maintained some of the orthodoxy and structure, but their liberation gave black Christians new nuances in the shaping of their theological identity. The Black religious experience in the north gained value with this liberty and was able to worship God in their emotionally expressive and distinct way. The burgeoning independence of black churches in the north would organize congregations of different denominations. The first of the Black denominations in the mid-1790 were the African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Methodist Zion Churches. The new independence gave a fresh voice of liberating progressive action for blacks and their preachers in the north. The Civil War was a sound of hope for the slaves and also brought devastation to the south. The freed blacks in the North enjoyed liberties the southern blacks were not allowed or threatened their participation. The church in the north was a voice of liberation for all blacks in the nation. Post-Civil War Legislation enacted upon the freedmen of color.

During Post-Civil War Reconstruction the southern states instituted legislation call “Black Code.” The southern blacks and the liberating cry of their black preacher within the churches would continue to face subjugation. Some of it were due to insurrections, the notable Nat Turner, and in general to continue a system of control, silence, and dismantling of progressive actions over the freed blacks. The southern white church would regain control over the black church and independence taken away. “Early in the Reconstruction era, however, an emergent ideology of separatism gave impetus to the organizing of a national black convention.”⁹ The future of the black

⁹ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, p. 21.

church would sustain, and the Civil War, Emancipation Proclamation, and Reconstruction would give a resurgence of collectives and give the black church, an identity, and stronger collective especially black Baptists. Vincent Harding writes, in the forward of *Jesus and the Disinherited*, an intention of Dr. Howard Thurman, and the statement reflects upon the quest of black churches and denominations during the period of Reconstruction,

“Those who need profound succor and strength to enable them to live in the present with dignity and creativity. Still the great teacher, preacher, and sage never strayed far from his basic urgent metaphor of the wall. Repeatedly he announced that he was attempting to explore what the teachings of Jesus have to say to those who stand at a moment in human history with their backs against the wall...the poor, the disinherited, the dispossessed.”¹⁰

Harding states Thurman’s ideal of the wall in how it divides, separates, and excludes from becoming an inherited community. The experience of the black church in the south, unlike the north, placed their backs up against the wall. The wall of the south would be torn down after the Civil War, and the Emancipation Proclamation would be a voice of liberation, but Reconstruction places blacks and their denominational churches with their backs against the wall. The black church in the south had to answer the question, “Where do we go from here?”

The origins of Baptists began in the early to a mid-seventeenth century in Europe. “It is clear that Baptist history is freighted with ambiguity, and those who strive to establish the singularities of the tradition are on a weak foundation.”¹¹ The Baptist distinctive is so diverse, and there are times when it is impossible to clearly state. Leroy

¹⁰ Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1976), viii.

¹¹ Bill J. Leonard, 1.

Fitts acknowledges indebtedness upon exploration of our heritage as Baptists and encourages Blacks to explore to gain a greater appreciation. He, Fitts, suggests

“Church history would tend to suggest that, in every age since Christian origins, there have existed communities of Christians among whom were held most, and by some all, of the peculiar doctrines of Baptists of today. Such were the Piedmontese, Waldenses, and the disciples of Gundulphus.”¹²

The importance of these groups would give shape to Baptist distinctive. The independence and autonomy were seen early as a distinctive from these groups and give shape to whom Baptist have become today. Church historians have been consistent with the tracking the development of Baptist through history. The opposition to the dogma and practices of the Catholic gave rise to the Reformation, and possibly Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, John Huss, Zwingli, Muntzer, and many others were strong opposition to its dogma and practices. These theologians were a few to challenge and question dogma, and promote unity. The contributions of these men and others helped to gain greater theological understanding and birth to practices that would give the church greater understanding of grace and practice.

“Baptist are a Reformation people who were born of ideas and incidents that flourished in Europe and Britain in the great religious and political upheavals of the sixteenth century. Luther’s legacy to Baptists and other heirs of the Reformation included the three classic concepts of faith alone, Scripture alone, and grace alone. His concern for the primary authority of Scripture, the priesthood of all believers, and the evangelical dimension of faith had profound impact on the Baptist understanding of the nature of Christian belief.”¹³

The Lutheran presentation was one of many during the Reformation, and others challenged some of his concepts and eventually gave birth to movements. A few important movements were the Mennonites, Swiss brethren, who were an Anabaptist

¹² Leroy Fitts, 20.

¹³ Bill J. Leonard, 18.

group formed by Menno Simons who emphasize church discipline, following Christ daily and devotion, and nonviolent resistance. John Calvin was another, and he was a doctrine of the total depravity of all humanity, and God's unconditional election of certain persons to salvation. Jacob Arminius would be the challenger to Calvin's doctrine. He believed grace made it possible for human free will in the process of salvation. All persons through repentance and faith could receive election. Arminius would be affirmed by a great number of Protestant Dutch pastors and were basic elements in Anglicanism and General Baptists. Robert G. Torbert remarked: "The rootage of Baptists lies in the sect-type of Christianity as over against the church-type with its sacerdotal ministry in institutionalism."¹⁴ The Anabaptist movement is seen as the sectarian type, and it emphasized believer's baptism and autonomy of the local congregation. The Anabaptist movement was the initial movement of Baptists. This movement was not received well in Europe or Britain for it posed challenges to life and practice.

The Baptist in colonial America was a group of radicals who would come through much adversity from the mainline religious society. They were influenced and influenced by being in America.

"Their theological diversity eventually extended from the Calvinism of the Primitive Baptists to the Arminianism of the Free Will Baptists, with innumerable doctrinal combinations in between. In certain regions, particularly the South, they grew from a persecuted minority to an enculturated, albeit de facto, religious establishment. Controversies as diverse as slavery, predestination, biblical inerrancy, and church architecture divided Baptists on the national, regional, and local levels."¹⁵

¹⁴ Leroy Fitts, 21.

¹⁵ Bill J. Leonard, 70.

The Puritans impacted Baptist or Separatist philosophies. One of the main core beliefs was the church the central component of a covenant community. Some of the first to arrive in America were the 102 passengers on the Mayflower, and 42 of them were Separatists. Some the notable leaders were John Robinson and John Smyth. These men recognized as Puritan leaders, but it would be a dissenter from the Church of England, Roger Williams, who began the Baptist movements in America. Williams was known for his sociopolitical concepts of church and state:

“Williams believed that preventing error in religion was impossible, for it required people to interpret God’s law, and people would inevitably err. He therefore concluded that government must remove itself from anything that touched upon human beings’ relationship with God. A society built on the principles Massachusetts espoused would lead at best to hypocrisy, because forced worship, he wrote, “stinks in God’s nostrils.” At worst, such a society would lead to a foul corruption—not of the state, which was already corrupt, but of the church.”¹⁶

Williams led the first concept of separation of church and state and it would lead to his exile from one colony to another. God was not through with this man, and he began a colony in Rhode Island. Many historians claim during this time he was baptized and officially recognized as a Baptist. The First Baptist Church formed in America through Williams’s leadership. Baptists’ have a great historical legacy and many have contributed early in its infancy to become over time a great people and denomination of faith.

The continued crisis in America would create not only a national identity but also a denominational identity within the Baptists’.

“The second half of the nineteenth century was as time of both trauma and promise in American religious life. The Civil War created an almost unbearable

¹⁶ Smithsonian.com, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/god-government-and-roger-williams-big-idea-6291280/?no-ist>.

national crisis evident in loss of life, devastation of property, and divisions that endured well in the twentieth century and beyond. The war's aftermath witnessed the increasing industrialization of the North, the long road to "Reconstruction" in the South, and the subsequent westward expansion of the nation." Baptist denominationalism continued to develop, often around regional and ethnic distinctions."¹⁷

Baptist identity has faced scrutiny since the beginning of its formation. Primarily, Baptist's nonconformance to the larger denominational culture by which its practice has caused much criticism. Whether it is the fiery prayers, the opposing certain church governance practices or the revivals with emphasis upon evangelism Baptists' have faced great opposition. Race has also been one of the issues to be dealt with especially in the American North and South pre and post- Civil War. America's Civil War also carried a perception as a religious war of ideals and civil, moral practice. Baptist's were primarily white or Anglo-Saxon, and blacks were mostly Methodist or part of the lower groups of Free to Primitive Baptists. The currents of change took a struggling minority group called Baptists and blacks and gave rise to one of the largest denominations. America has become a greater nation due to this struggle and bonding of the two groups: Blacks and Baptists'.

The early history of the Baptist church was unified. The church regardless of location maintained the values of autonomy from episcopal structures and the inerrant word of God. However, the issue of slavery would become a dividing issue for the mainline white Baptist church. As the country became divided over the issue of slavery, so would the church. The abolitionists from the north would advocate for the abolishment of slavery, but those in the south would fight for the maintenance of system

¹⁷ Bill J. Leonard, 197.

enslaving hundreds of thousands of African Americans. The country could not withstand the depth of division, political dialogue, or how entrenched those from the north and the south are in their positions. The division exposed by the issue of slavery became evident in the life of the church. The once unified Baptist church divided into Northern Baptist (American Baptist) and Southern Baptist.

The white Baptist church while suffering from bad doctrinal beliefs as it relates to slavery however attempted to follow the biblical admonition for the salvation of humanity. The white church taught the slaves from the scriptures. Emphasis placed on scriptures which affirmed slavery, especially, the slave's responsibility to obey their masters (Ephesians 6: 5). The scripture was used to both liberate and enslave. As the slaves heard the gospel, they came to accept the salvation message and baptized. Some were authorized to preach the gospel. Churches formed on plantations, and itinerant slave preachers would be responsible for preaching to these plantation churches. These plantation churches would become the foundation for denominational churches.

Northern churches while fighting for the abolition of slavery suffered from another form of bad doctrinal practices as it relates to freed slaves. Slaves were allowed to worship with white congregants however they were permitted solely on balcony seats. The African Methodist Episcopal Church organized in Pennsylvania by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones who left St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church because of the northern discriminatory practices. While the preachers, Jones and Allen were "limited to black congregations. Also, the blacks were made to sit in a separate gallery built in the

church when their portion of the congregation increased.”¹⁸ Therefore, discriminatory practices were not limited to the South; discrimination was pervasive.

The Baptist in the North and South split due to political issues and slavery. The American Baptist Missionary Union (later Home Missionary Society) from the north and the Southern Baptist Convention in the south. The struggle has continued for decades, and a centennial has passed and still divided. The work of the HMS continued despite differences and was able to pierce evangelically into the south even amid southern opposition and optimism. The American Baptists’ in the north would assist in the birth of the Black Baptist churches in the south. These northern missionaries had reached into the black communities and taught and trained many blacks to become pastors and teachers. The result would be the forming of black Baptist churches in the southern states.

The formation of the black Baptist church locally and nationally would arise out of a strong determination to not only come to understand their new freedom but to develop new walls within their communities. Many of the black Baptist churches, especially in the south, had more Baptist than in the north. These developing churches would eventually begin to form into a denominational gathering. Blacks wanted their identity in every matter as it applied to the church. While blacks departed from the white church in the late to early 18th and 19th centuries, assistance was granted and received through missionary support to assist in the goal of Black church independence. Those Blacks in leadership, pastor, and lay persons held to establishing black identity civil, social, and spiritual. The mindset of pastors was to establish a larger structure of the black church and eventually their missionary society, and convention. The associational

¹⁸ Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press, accessed March 9, 2017, http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/African_Methodist_Episcopal.

movements formed, yet the black leaders continued to seek greater movements toward the development of the black church.

In 1840 the American Baptist Missionary Convention was formed in New York at the Abyssinian Baptist Church as a regional convention. The convention was a success, and the stresses of leadership affected the efforts to sustain the missions focus. There were other movements between the years of 1840-1880 but were not able to sustain and eventually decapitated. Hope not lost in people who like the Israelites continued to “Look unto the hills from whence cometh their help,” and like Paul, they would “Press toward the mark for the prize of the higher call in Christ.” Black Baptist, as all Baptist, strive until it happens and with great zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ and the compulsion to make disciples and to organize the church, eventually would form a national body of black Baptists.

“The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. traces a history of significant growth and achievements, sometimes attended by periods of turbulence, to Saturday, November 22, 1880, when 151 persons from 11 states met in Montgomery, Alabama and organized the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. A yearning to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached on the Mother Soil of Africa drove this organizing. The Rev. W. H. McAlpine of Alabama elected as its first President. Six years later in 1886, 600 delegates from 17 states gathered at the First Baptist Church in St. Louis, Missouri and formed the National Baptist Convention of America. Seven years later in 1893, the National Baptist Education Convention was formed. None of the three Conventions thrived separately. So in 1895, the three bodies achieved a merger in a meeting held at the Friendship Baptist

Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The Reverend E. C. Morris from Little Rock, Arkansas was chosen as the president of this merged body.”¹⁹

The formation of a new convention allowed for the realization of unity on a national level. Once formed the convention leadership advanced with a hard stance on fulfilling their missionary purpose through the home and foreign ministry. Africa and America would become their focus, and especially those who were oppressed people everywhere. Specialized ministries were formed under the conventions new structure: Educational, Foreign and Home Mission, Publishing, and B.Y.P.U. to name the major starters. These ministries became the bedrock and are still functional in the convention setting today. While there were others formed The National Baptist Convention U.S. A. has been the beacon throughout the years for Blacks who have been oppressed, especially through slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction, and for Black Baptists everywhere as the beacon for unity continue to calls for unity.

First Baptist Church is one of the many churches across this nation formed from oppression to freedom. The church is in the center of a community rich in history. Even its own rich history and heritage share the story of the struggle for blacks, and the overcoming of slavery, the development of a spiritual identity, and the establishment of a unified Black Baptists’ identity as well. The stories of FBC are laden with sorrow and pain, yet filled with highlights of days filled with joy and happiness. FBC faces the continued progress of moving forward into the future to create growth and development of the Christian faith in America. With new found enthusiasm FBC presses forward into the future to discover more of God’s purpose of the local black Baptist congregation in

¹⁹ National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., accessed February 28, 2015, <http://www.nationalbaptist.com/about-us/our-history/index.html>.

Lockhart, Texas. “We are celebrating the past, by changing the present, and creating a future,” for “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” FBC has come a long way, and God will take His body of believers even further together as they seek unity among believers and the furtherance of taking the Gospel into the entire world.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this theological foundations chapter is to investigate the faith and spiritual implications of restoration and building efforts within the divine truths revealed in the religious system of thought. The subject of restoration is fundamental to the process of obtaining a passionate faith-walk in Christ. Restoration theology, Liberation theology, the theology of prayer, and evolved organizational leadership explored as it relates to the study of God in the spiritual considerations of divine truth.

A most fulfilling role for leaders, whether on a macro level (across an organization or church) or micro level (in a small group or team), is creating an environment in which all contribute their God-given gifts to the ministry. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, yet each divine person has a distinct role that contributes to the loving fellowship. Moreover, the church finds its life and ministry when it reflects the unity and diversity modeled in the Trinity.¹

The following pages under their respective subtitles will explore the religious systems developed as a result of Restoration Theology, Liberation Theology, the Theology of Prayer: in both the individual and corporate settings, along with managing Organizational processes to realize goals accordingly. These distinct areas of theology will explore the various ways in which the concept of restoration relates to the biblical story of Nehemiah. Throughout this chapter, there will be several references made

¹ Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer. *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, multiplying Influence, Defining Character* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 70.

concerning the Christian call to action in the form of leadership, evangelism, and corporate worship.

Historical references will be made throughout this chapter, as the past helps shape the perspectives of present scholars, research, and speaks to the culture within the church. Classical and modern theologians are presented to provide varied perspectives within the discussion of restoration principles and methods. At the conclusion of this chapter, the researcher will offer summary observations resulting from the blended discussions offered throughout the investigation.

Restoration Theology

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the Judeo-Christian belief system became an overwhelming force to be reckoned with, as several religious sects began to develop as a result. “The Acts of the Apostles describes the expansion of the church after the ascension of Jesus.”² The liberation of sin and death were among the biggest aspects of the New Testament faith that helped to usher millions to convert to a Christocentric theology. Because of the message that a perfect man, Jesus Christ, sacrificed his life to offer atonement for sins, the New Testament following gained worldwide appeal.

The New Testament was written as the early church was formed. This community of believers confessed that Jesus is the Messiah and that He is Lord and Savior. As non-Jewish Gentle peoples came into the church, the church was transformed into a genuinely multinational community. The church believed this was the fulfillment of the promises of God that through the seed of Abraham, all nations would be blessed.³

² Matthews, W. *World Religions*, 7th Ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2013), 306.

³ Shenk, D. W. *Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church: Exploring the Mission of Two Communities* (Scottsdale, PA; Herald Press, 2003), 125-126.

The Protestant Reformation, a dismantling of the Roman Catholic Church, began in the sixteenth century. The most notable reformers include Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Huldrych Zwingli.⁴ These reformers were adamant about theological change and achieved popular acceptance by most of Europe with the exposure of corruption by Catholic leadership. Also during this time of religious reform, Christopher Columbus began the first of his many voyages to the “new world.”

The man most credited—and documented—with the discovery (or rediscovery) of the Americas, was Christopher Columbus, who made four voyages to the region, the first beginning in 1492 and the last in 1502. Although he explored the Caribbean and central and South America, which he believed were Asian lands, his reports and maps would prove invaluable to those who would follow and colonize North America.⁵

Although on assignment to explore new territory for Europe to claim, he too helped to provide opportunities for religious freedom from rigid Catholic controls as several of his voyages established permanent residences and refused to go back to Spain. Theological reform became such a popular idea in Europe that a series of wars began, between Protestant and Catholic regions, otherwise known as the Thirty Years War. These wars lasted between years 1618-1648 and set out proposals for the revitalization of the church.⁶

Restoration theology is a term developed as a result of the Restoration Movement that took place in the early Nineteenth Century across America. This movement called for an alignment of Christian processes and values in to denounce the divisions found among

⁴ McGrath, A. E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th Ed. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2011.

⁵ Grizzard, F. E., and Smith, D. B. *Jamestown Colony: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2007), 65.

⁶ McGrath, A. E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th Ed. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2011.

various denominational groups. As a result, Restoration Theology was birthed, calling all New Testament believers of Christ Christians.

A group known as “Kingdom Now” and/or the Restoration Movement insists that the Church is to become unified and mature under the government of Apostles and Prophets (such as Manuel Gutierrez, Bill Hamon, Earl Paulk, Rick Joyner, Cindy Jacobs, and Charles Peter Wagner) and Apostolic Associations (such as Apostolic Council for Educational Accountability), and take control of secular institutions sufficient to demonstrate that the Church embodies the authority of Christ.⁷

This theology called for a restoring of core and fundamental values of apostolic Christianity. This non-denominational approach to church fellowship was meant to unify the people and strengthen the Gospel Message. A few of the classic theologians who served as the forerunners of this movement and theology are Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell.

Since its beginnings in Asia in 1882, the Stone-Campbell movement has grown to include thousands of churches and tens of thousands of members from Pakistan and India on the west to Japan and Korea on the east, and from China and Mongolia on the north to Indonesia and the Philippines on the south. This growth resulted from the labors of missionaries sent from Stone-Campbell churches in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, and New Zealand. This growth took place in the midst of controversy that at times threatened to destroy the Movement from within. Indeed, the current divisions in the Stone-Campbell Movement, especially as exemplified in the United States, arose in part due to events that occurred in Asian Missions. In 1874 and 1875 the Stone-Campbell Movement in the United States organized respectively the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions (CWB) and the Foreign Christian Missionary Society (FCMS). The purpose of the former was to pursue both home and foreign missions, while the purpose of the latter was to carry the movement’s message to lands outside the United States.⁸

Restoration theology may be applied to the story of Nehemiah as he exemplified a unified approach to restoring the walls with a common goal. Nehemiah also fostered a

⁷ Russell Sharrock. *Covenant Theology: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Pentecostal Covenant Theology* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Enterprises, Inc., 2006), 190.

⁸ Douglas A. Foster. *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 32.

passion for restoration as he appealed his case to his King, and solicited help from fellow Israelites upon his return home. Modern theologians often compare Nehemiah's approach to the concept of restoration with ecumenical unification efforts.

Restorationism (sometimes called primitivism) generally has these characteristics: 1. The true church apostatized and ceased to exist; 2. The various denominations that emerged are false churches; 3. The New Testament provides a blueprint or prescription for the exact character of the true church; 4. Each restorationist sect believes it has "restored" the true church in its pristine purity. Primitivism assumes a simplistic hermeneutics that likens the new Testament to a rule book that clearly spells out the nature of the Church of Christ upon earth. That there have been scores of restorationist sects, each claiming to be the true church and each insisting it has correctly followed "the simple pattern," makes such a view of the New Testament suspect.⁹

Theology helps to shape the leadership component through the restoration theory with particular emphasis on vision, purpose, and execution. Restoration Theory rests on the premise that there is "One Lord, One, God, and One Baptism." This scripture also helps to explain the Restoration Theological perspective about evangelism. By aligning the Gospel message with a unified purpose of saving souls, the Restoration theorists argue, will create an influx of evangelistic conversions. Another element to consider, concerning restoration theology, is the corporate worship practice as evidenced by Nehemiah and his fellow builders.

Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology is a perspective researched as a result of oppressed people who were searching for liberation. Black Theology created as an offshoot of Liberation Theology, where there is a need for an almighty, resourceful God to protect and care for a

⁹ Leroy Garrett. *Stone-Campbell Movement: The Story of the American Restoration Movement* (New York, NY: College Press Publishing, 2006), 8.

poor and spiritually impoverished humanity. Dr. James Cone is the more modern theologian and creator of Black Theology; while Dr. Manuel Gutierrez, classic theologian, created the original Liberation Theology concept.

Liberation theology begins with the recognition that God is prejudiced in favor of the poor. God is not neutral and value-free...Liberation theology's option for the poor is intimately connected with theological method. The primacy of praxis in liberation theology maintains that truth is obtained through reflection on liberating praxis. Liberation theology's option for the poor also involves commitment to a concrete way of social change.¹⁰

“Poverty is the single biggest hermeneutic tool used to re-contextualize the Christian faith into liberation theology.”¹¹ Poverty, for the liberation theologian, is sourced because of sin. “The theologians of liberation wholeheartedly affirm that sin is the fundamental alienation, the root of a situation of injustice and exploitation.”¹² This theology compels Christians to think beyond the traditional parameters of legalism of the scriptures, about right and wrong behaviors, and engage the world with a social consciousness. “It was within the bleak social and political environment that liberation theology developed, growing out of the reflection of the Christian poor on their social and political situations in the light of the Bible and their Christian faith.”¹³ The goal of liberation theology is to provide freedom to the marginalized and oppressed. For the liberation theologian, sin is the culprit of the issues surrounding bondage and injustice in the world.

¹⁰ Charles Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 185.

¹¹ David Turner. *An Introduction to Liberation Theology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1994), 64.

¹² Denis Carroll. *What is Liberation Theology?* (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press LTD, 1987), 32.

¹³ Victoria Harrison. *Religion and Modern Thought* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2007), 252.

Liberation theology uses a different set of tools than does classical theology. Whereas in the past, philosophy was used as an aid to theology (e.g. Aquinas' use of Aristotle), liberation theology is using the social sciences—more specifically, sociology and political science—as an aid. Marxism, in particular, is especially useful for liberation theologians as an instrument for social analysis. This is not to imply, of course, that liberation theology is based on Marxism or that those involved with the struggle for liberation are Marxists. To the contrary, most liberation theologians hasten to insist that the Bible provides our overall approach to life, while Marx is simply a useful analytical tool.¹⁴

The theological liberation movement has its beginnings in the Catholic setting, as several of its church leaders became concerned with the suffering found within their respective settings. “At a meeting in Medellin, Colombia, in 1979, the Latin American bishops laid the foundation for this way of thinking about the Christian faith.”¹⁵ These leaders were not only disturbed with the poverty plaguing their communities but were also determined to address this epidemic by alerting those in authoritative position for the sake of change. “Liberation theologians are among the few who have dared to underline, from the left, the deficiencies of the liberal human rights movement.”¹⁶ A few of the well-known liberation theologians that have made significant strides in their individual contributions with moving this message of hope include Gustavo Gutiérrez and Dr. James Cone. Both of these men were instrumental in working to administer justice within their respective settings through the persistent service rendered via sermon presentations, printed materials, books, and other means of lifting awareness.

In his book, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), Cone, who many claim to be responsible for the phrase “Black liberation theology,” posits the phrase is

¹⁴ Teresa Whalen. *The Authentic Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Evanston, IL: Sheed & Ward, 1993), 86.

¹⁵ Cynthia Stewart. *The Catholic Church: A Brief Popular History* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2008), 303.

¹⁶ Therese Lysaught. *On moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives on Medical Ethics*, 3rd Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 141.

particularly appropriate for contemporary America based on its symbolic power to convey what White folks mean by oppression and what Black folks mean by liberation. However, Cone's perception of Blackness is not just confirmed to the United States. He contends that Blackness symbolizes oppression and liberation in any society. Moreover, according to Anthony Bradley (2010), the notion of Blackness is a symbol of oppression that can be applied to all persons of color who have a history of oppression. Additionally, Cone makes it clear at the outset that he did not write *A Black Theology of Liberation* for a White audience (unless, according to Cone, Whites are willing to be open to a deeper analysis of Christian doctrine); Cone's target audience is the Black community. Cone states: "Whites may read it...but an authentic understanding is dependent on the Blackness of their existence in the world."¹⁷

The goal of the forerunners of liberation theology is that as they share with the world, the world will hopefully respond with positive changes accordingly. Society's culture has everything to do with the acceptable behaviors, giving credence to traditions and trends. Sadly, culture is influenced by the majority of those in the position of influence and constitutes a standard of acceptable behaviors that are expected to be followed by all. Culture influences mindsets and choices not easily changed without the consent of the masses. There is a democratic approach to culture as the majority of persons in positions of power are the ones who sanction the acceptable behaviors, beliefs, and mindsets of all.

This theology compels Christians to think beyond the traditional parameters of legalism of the scriptures, about right and wrong behaviors, and engage the world with a social consciousness. "It was within the bleak social and political environment that liberation theology developed, growing out of the reflection of the Christian poor on their social and political situations in the light of the Bible and their Christian faith."¹⁸ The goal of liberation theology is to provide freedom to the marginalized and oppressed. For

¹⁷ David L. Moody. *Political Melodies in the Pews?: The Voice of the Black Christian Rapper in the Twenty-first-Century Church* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 48.

¹⁸ Victoria Harrison. *Religion and Modern Thought* (SCM Press, 2007), 252.

the liberation theologian, sin is the culprit of the issues surrounding bondage and injustice in the world.

Freedom from oppression for any minority people in a society or circumstance is considered to be salvation in liberation theology. Sin, consequently, is understood as anything that prolongs this oppression and others and perpetuates the power structures which force oppression.¹⁹

By expanding on the theological liberation foundation, the researcher hopes to bring attentiveness on the problems facing African-Americans both locally and abroad. The researcher draws strength from his past, as he observed effective church leadership with unified agendas for change. It is through prayerful consideration of the African-American struggle where the researcher will aim at rebuilding through the process of educational awareness through the influential reach of the church.

Theology of Prayer

The Theology of Prayer is offered as a systematic discipline, that when intentionally applied, results in divine connection and restored spiritual awakening with God. This concept of experiencing the miraculous as a result of prayer is evidenced throughout the Bible and shown effective whenever applied. Classic theologians agree that the discipline of prayer associated with meditative exercises encouraged by Holy Scriptures for the regular practice by every Christian.

¹⁹ Patricia Hawley. *Desperate for Authenticity: A Critical Analysis of the Feminist Theology of the Feminist Theology of Virginia Ramey Mollenkott*: (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2010), 76.

There are not many works that seek to present a full biblical theology of prayer. Theology, in the best sense of the term, is just the effort to understand, as fully and accurately as possible, what the Bible teaches on a particular subject. Prayer is not an activity that bypasses the mind. There are aspects of prayer that go beyond our understanding, but understanding the truth is essential to all parts of the Christian life, including prayer. Address some distortions in the practice of prayer in the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote: “I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.” (1 Cor. 14:15). We are concerned about the will of God when we pray; we come to know the will of God when we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2).²⁰

Regimented prayer may be applied to the story of Nehemiah as he exemplified meditative behaviors upon his return to Israel as he surveyed the land for the first three days of his stay. “He did not jump into the work immediately upon arrival but waited three days to appraise the situation; and when he did set to business, he did not hold a tell-all press conference but kept his goals largely secret, even doing reconnaissance under cover of night.”²¹ His independent observations and intentional solitude portray Nehemiah’s pensive, thoughtful posture. “God did not merely open the way for Nehemiah; He also obtained for him from the king full authority and provision to rebuild the city of Jerusalem: all this came through prayer and fasting.”²² Modern theologians often compare Nehemiah’s approach to the concept of regimented prayer with the successful results of his quest.

Nehemiah is introduced as a pious Jewish man working for the Persian emperor, and deeply concerned about recent reports coming from Jerusalem. The survivors, he is told, are in “great trouble and shame,” and there is further bad news about the physical condition of the walls and gates of the city itself. Nehemiah responds to these reports by turning to God in the form, once again, of the postexilic standard “penitential prayer.” This form of prayer includes confession and the

²⁰ Wayne R. Spear. *Talking to God: The Theology of Prayer* (Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2002), 9-10.

²¹ J. Oswald Sander. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 166.

²² Derek Prince. *Secrets of a Prayer Warrior* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2009), 173.

affirmation that God was in the right for enforcing God's threats with regard to disobeying the commandments of Moses. Nehemiah's prayer and fasting focus on his working up the courage to approach the Persian administration. There are interesting parallels to Esther's preparation to approach the Persian emperor as well, including fasting and prayer, and one wonders if a similar potential punishment—death—is implied in Nehemiah's concerns.²³

Theology helps to connect organizational leadership with the theology of prayer as Nehemiah displays constant communication with those who helped him rebuild the wall. The communication of prayer also reflected by Nehemiah's application of this principle among his fellow Israelites. Likewise, the act of evangelism is influenced by the theology of prayer because of the faithful connections made only evidenced as a result of disciplined prayer.

This art of praying is neither something ritual, nor an individual meditation. Rather it is communication, based on a long tradition of texts about God, his people and their common history. Communication allows for room for many genres: complaint, confession and even exclamations such as: "please remember." From this basic feature of communication, one may conclude that biblical prayer as in Nehemiah does not attempt to make God change reality; rather it wants the common history to continue. With its emphasis on communication, using all possible genres to address God, biblical prayer is located between two extremes to be found in human religion. It avoids communal ritual, techniques of charming or attempts to manipulate and it avoids the techniques of evoking spiritual experiences or individual meditation.²⁴

Another element to consider, concerning prayer discipline, is the corporate involvement as evidenced by Nehemiah and his fellow builders. Additionally, the individual aspect of prayer discipline to be considered as Jesus instructed his followers to "go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and

²³ Gail R. O'Day, and David L. Petersen. *Theological Bible Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 160.

²⁴ Bob Becking and Eric Peels. *Psalms and Prayers: Papers Read at the Joint meeting of the Society of Old Testament Study* (The Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 2007), 235.

your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”²⁵ The successful result experienced by intimate prayer is significant to the faithful and trusting relationship between the believer and God.

Organizational Leadership

The concept of Organizational Leadership often associated with the business concept of professional management. Organizational Leadership, however, is respectfully multidisciplinary as it focuses on cultivating the relationship between leadership and the organizations that follow. “Servant leaders empower others through modeling. They motivate others by their own example. Instead of driving people through overbearing authority, servant leaders draw them through an attractive life.”²⁶ This concept evidenced throughout the Bible through the inception, growth, and on-going development of the New Testament Church.

New Testament leadership is always team based. The New Testament images and language for a transformed leadership is breathtaking. Since the church was birthed out of Judaism, the priesthood was the model at hand. Priests were set apart to represent the people before God and God to the People. Yet, surprisingly, leaders of the local church are never called “priests.” The priesthood under the final and ultimate high priest, Jesus Christ, now belongs to all believers. Just as everyone is a minister in the body of Christ so everyone is priest (1 Peter 2:4-9).²⁷

Classic theologians agree that the organizational leadership concept is shown throughout the Bible, but most particularly with Jesus’ involvement in establishing the church. Modern theologian, Dr. Alfred Thompson positions leaders of organizations to be

²⁵ NASV, Matthew 6:5-6.

²⁶ Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer. *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, multiplying Influence, Defining Character* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 63.

²⁷ Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer. *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, multiplying Influence, Defining Character* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 72.

in the decision-making role. Dr. Thompson, in his book, *Bars, Bridges, and Blessings: A Three-Dimensional Theory for Your Success* describes the Organizational Leadership role in the following:

The organizational leadership role is a complex one. Leaders of large groups have been designated to move entire processes along; ensuring productivity; steering direction; and most importantly: answering questions just to name a few. All of these responsibilities and more are expected from those in positions of authority. The way in which leadership is evaluated is typically based upon the success or failure of their respective balancing act...Leaders must ask themselves the pivotal question of whether their actions have been carefully weighed. And if decision were made out of haste, are these wavering responses indicative of personal indifference or external apprehensions? To tackle the inward dilemma, one must first understand the value in the decision needed to be made. It is during times of persona indifference when seeking more information on the subject is vital.²⁸

One of the most popular characteristics of good organizational leadership is the ability to clearly define objectives and goals to all members of the group. “As person embrace ownership of their roles, both church and or organization will take on an emblematical reformed life.”²⁹ This responsibility of the leader to be led by the Holy Spirit is what separates organizations which succeed, and those that do not last very long.

Behind all the busyness of the apostles was the executive activity of the Spirit. As supreme administrator of the church and chief strategist of the missionary enterprise, He was everywhere present. The Spirit did not delegate authority into secular or carnal hands, even when a particular job has no direct spiritual teaching involved; all workers must be Spirit-led and filled. Likewise today, selection of kingdom leaders must not be influenced by worldly wisdom, wealth, or status. The prime consideration is spirituality. When a church or missions organization follows a different set of criteria, it essentially removes the Spirit from leadership. As a consequence, the Spirit is grieved and quenched, and the result if spiritual death and death of that effort.³⁰

²⁸ Alfred L. Thompson. *Bars, Bridges, & Blessings: A Three Dimensional Theory for Your Success* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2015), 56 and 60.

²⁹ Georgette V. Prime-Godwin. *The Nehemiah Prototype: A Complementary Guide to Organizational Leadership for the 21st Century Church* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2014), 7.

³⁰ J. Oswald Sander. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 78.

Organizational Leadership may be applied to the story of Nehemiah as he exemplified strong communicative skills. His personal objective was clear, and therefore his message to others was just as effective. Nehemiah also had to lead in the midst of opposition, as he and his group were being harassed by the enemy to try and stop their progress of building the wall. Modern theologians often compare Nehemiah's approach to Organizational Leadership with fearless faith in God's divine will.

To those who are the called, lead with integrity, work with renewed vigor, and love the people we have been entrusted to shepherd with the agape likeness of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Nehemiah performed a plenipotentiary feat; he rebuilt the wall and reformed the people within 52 days. The Twenty-first-century church can use a similar blueprint from the book of Nehemiah to restructure and realign its ministries in record time, a sobering 52 days!³¹

Theology helps to connect Organizational Leadership with restoration efforts as collective efforts, when clearly defined by leadership, can result in successful outcomes. Likewise, the act of evangelism is influenced by Organizational Leadership because of the Great Commission goal made by Jesus to every believer to communicate. This communication, however, was very specific to the spreading of the Gospel Message to make other disciples.

Christ's ministry of discipleship and the cross meant the multiplication of Himself in the believers. His ministry was the established template for all who would follow in Christian leadership. Inclusion, filling the void, and bridging the gap between God the Father and man was always His goal.³²

³¹ Georgette V. Prime-Godwin. *The Nehemiah Prototype: A Complementary Guide to Organizational Leadership for the 21st Century Church* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2014), 9.

³² Lambdin, E. *The Grown up Church: Restoration of the New Testament Church* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2014), 79.

This faith established during the first century AD, in its original context, was not a religious sect. In fact, Jesus, the head of the church, saved his harshest remarks for the religious leadership of His day. Not only was this not a religious institution, but it also was not a political organization.

There wasn't anything superficial or corrupt about Jesus in any way. His ministry was not about titles-it was grass-roots function among the common folk. The religious leaders of His day hated Him and because of their extreme envy of Him and His powerful ministry, which drew people away from their ministry, they set him up for crucifixion.³³

It was through the establishment of the New Testament Church, where Jesus laid the foundation and commissioned all of His followers to make disciples. As a result, several churches launched. "The disciples who accompanied Jesus, both men and women, recognized his authority as of God. He trained twelve of these disciples to convey his teachings and healings to villages."³⁴ The purpose of the New Testament church was to re-establish a relationship with God through the Lord, Jesus Christ; to love God and all of the humanity; and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, guide others to this same faith.

The following of instructions by the members of an organization is just as important, if not more, of the directives made by the leadership involved. Another element to consider, concerning Organizational Leadership, is the corporate involvement as evidenced by Nehemiah and his fellow builders.

The second chapter of the book of Nehemiah gives a good account of his game plan and team-building skills. He began his speech to the people he depended on to get the work done by pointing to the destruction. Instead of scolding, however, he appealed to their pride and to their emotions. As he pointed out the obvious desolation, he asked rhetorically, "Do you want to live any longer in disgrace?" Humbly, yet authoritatively, he urged them to join him in the great task of

³³ Lambdin, E. *The Grown up Church: Restoration of the New Testament Church* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2014), 34.

³⁴ Matthews, W. *World Religions, 7th Ed.* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2013), 293.

rebuilding. He didn't shame them further, and he didn't say that he would rebuild the city or that he work for them to do. Instead, he spoke of the trouble both he and they were in and called on all to join him. He made it clear that he would join them in the task when he said, "Let us start rebuilding." He convinced them that what they had considered impossible was in fact quite possible. He indicated authority and responsibility would be shared while never using the first-person singular. This was going to be a cooperative operation. As a point man, he recruited them to be on his team in perfect team-building style. There is a great lesson here. Just because something is immensely difficult or has not been done for a long time (or ever) is no reason to think it cannot be done at all. It took more than three generations before someone was willing to act as a point man for the Jews in captivity. And as monumental as the operation was, Nehemiah risked his life to enact the vision God had given him. He applied the method alluded to in our wheels for team building—and it worked for him.³⁵

Conclusion

This theological foundations chapter explored the various theological principles related to the theme of restoration, and the connections between elemental factors influencing Nehemiah's rebuilding such as leadership, evangelism, and corporate worship. This theological investigation has helped to structure the researcher's perspective of Nehemiah's story with the classical and modern theologian insights offered. Each theological perspective offered in this research presented an alternative reflection to the evolving discussion of restoration. The restoration movement, itself, was distinguished between the theological perspectives that derived from this historic crusade.

Restoration Theology provided insight into how core fundamental Christian values are key to maintaining, sustaining, and creating future or restoration at First Baptist Church. Liberation Theology provided freedom for the researcher to examine the condition of the context and become a voice of freedom for those who have been oppressed and marginalized. The Theology of Prayer allowed the researcher to examine

³⁵ Del Harris. *On Point: Four Steps to Better Life Teams* (Charleston, SC: Advantage, 2012), 108.

prayer and the discipline it provides in connecting with God and a restoration of a spiritual awakening within the researcher and the context. Lastly, Organizational Leadership addressed restorative process in terms of providing clarity of purpose to achieve planned outcomes and embracing the individual and corporate goals within First Baptist.

The similarity of purpose, clearly defined objectives and unity within a group, are the elements needed for restoration to take place. These components connected to the qualifying aspects required to achieve successful organizational leadership, evangelism, and to experience the miraculous as a result of corporate worship through prayer. This research lifts the importance of prayer and meditation, and brings awareness to the divine protections and provisions associated with the intentional systematic practice, as evidenced in the life of Nehemiah.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The objective of this Theoretical Foundations chapter is to explore the various academic disciplines about theory associated with building restoration among people within an organization. The subject of restoration is fundamental to the process of realizing goals within an existing group who are not presently engaged in any unifying efforts. By exploring the multi-disciplinary theories connected to restoration, this research will bring awareness to the alternative perspectives offered in the area of business, psychology, and sociology respectively.

Edward O. Wilson's book, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (1999), is a great example of trending scholarship. Writing from the perspective of a Scientific Materialist who is interested in environmental conservation, Wilson asserts that we will be unable to resolve the problems we are faced with if we do not integrate knowledge from the natural and social sciences. We accordingly must rely on "consilience," or the jumping together or blending of facts and theory from several disciplines. He states, "as we cross the boundaries of several disciplines, we find ourselves in an increasingly unstable and disorienting region. The ring closest to the intersection of various disciplines, where most real-world problems exist, is the one in which fundamental analysis is most needed. Wilson therefore believes multidisciplinary perspectives take into account reality and are most apt to generate solutions for complicated challenges. His research is typical of many efforts among scholars to span conceptual issues and diverse fields of study.¹

¹ David A. McEntire. *Disciplines, Disasters, and Emergency Management: The Convergence and Divergence of Concepts, Issues and Trends from the Research Literature* (Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, 2007), 4.

The following pages will explore theories and scientific systems developed to address elemental factors when leading a campaign of restoration. The theories of Organizational Leadership addresses the restoration roles at First Baptist giving each member an opportunity to participate in the capacity as a team, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides insight into the individual and corporate needs of each member and how they reach self-fulfillment, and the Sociology of Architecture will address the restoration of First Baptist's need for a restored physical structure and how structures provide association and affect emotions of the community. These theories will be investigated to gain insight on the disciplines they derive from; the problems they were created to address; and the impact on the restoration of the people the respective theory has accordingly.

The United States National Research Council defined restoration as the return of an ecosystem to a close approximation of its condition prior to disturbance. This definition was expanded by Cairns who asserted that the goal of restoration should be devoted to returning damaged ecosystems to a condition that is structurally and functionally similar to the pre-disturbance state. Alternatively, others involved in the field of restoration ecology provide definitions for restoration that more explicitly focus on historical, social, cultural, political, aesthetic and moral aspects.²

Systematic methods and theories, along with the cultural influences affecting American societies, will be explored to obtain greater insight into a holistic understanding of restoration themes. A few of the factors affecting restoration within the church addressed throughout this essay include culture; economics; social justice; and community involvement. Additionally, various well-known and expert-authority scholars,

² Stephen Darby and David Sear. *River Restoration: Managing the Uncertainty in Restoring Physical Habitat* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), 4.

both classical and modern, will be explored to adequately address the problems and solutions associated with the process of restoration.

Restoration, although a profoundly human endeavor, is conceptualized within a worldview that places human beings outside of natural systems and prioritizes repair of structure and function above restoration of relationship. However, a broken relationship with land is at the root of the ecological degradation that restoration seeks to repair. Restoration of relationship to land would, therefore, seem to require equivalence, if not a priority focus, as a restoration goal.³

Organizational Leadership Theory

“Organizational Leadership Theory is defined by four categories of leadership as

1. Leadership traits; 2. Influence based on power; 3. Behavior roles of leaders; and 4.

Transformational leadership that inspires change.”⁴ The theme of restoration closely aligned with this theory because of the leadership component needed to launch movement among a group. Vision and communication components of this theory shape the strength of this concept.

Behavioral theories of leadership examine two primary dimensions of behavior and define leadership. Studies conducted in the 1950s at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan provided fundamental concepts of leadership behavior that have strongly influenced subsequent research and theory in organizational leadership. Two basic dimensions of leadership behavior were identified: a) task-related behavior and b) relationship-related behavior. Effective leaders are concerned with both task and relationship and adjust their focus on one or the other from situation to situation.⁵

This theory was created to address the distinctions between those who lead and persons who follow. The role of leadership within a group, as well as the leadership of

³ Dave Egan, Evan E. Hjerpe, and Jesse Abrams. *Human Dimensions of Ecological Restoration: Integrating Science, Nature, and Culture* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 270.

⁴ Patti Chance. *Introduction to Educational Leadership & Organizational Behavior: Theory into Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 100.

⁵ Patti Chance. *Introduction to Educational Leadership & Organizational Behavior: Theory into Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 101.

smaller groups within a larger all-inclusive entity, and the roles assumed by each office is what Organizational Leadership Theory helps to address. Similarly, the issues faced by the researcher within the context intendeds to address leaders of smaller auxiliaries, but who are subject to oversight by the head pastor, with a need to restore relationships accordingly. With the careful incorporation of the Organizational Leadership Theory, there will be a positive impact on the restoration of the people due to the clearly defined roles of each office within the context.

Transformational leadership theories were discussed and broadly defined as leadership that effects change in an organization. Burns described transformational leadership as an engagement between leaders and followers, who are bound by common purpose. The notion of a leader's commitment to moral purpose and personal values undergirds the concept of transformational leadership. Sergiovanni conceptualized leadership as emanating from various sources of authority and contended that the primary basis of educational leadership should be professional and moral authority.⁶

Organizational Leadership Theory is connected to culture as the structures developed to direct people change the perceptions of the trending majority. "A cultural perspective that acknowledges the existence of national and occupational macro cultures, functional subcultures, and subcultures based on rank and common experience is an essential component of organizational leadership."⁷ Likewise, there is an economic effect on organizations where the leadership theory is applied, as profits tend to stay progressive. When applied in the community setting, Organizational Leadership methodology will impact the social injustice with a clear objective of equality for all.

Further, leadership was explored from a lens of critical theory. From this perspective, leadership is concerned with the nature, culture, and structure of

⁶ Patti Chance. *Introduction to Educational Leadership & Organizational Behavior: Theory into Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 101.

⁷ Edgar H. Schein. *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2016), 120.

schools and calls for leaders to confront issues of class and power to ensure equity and to preserve democratic ideals. Yukl's flexible leadership model explains how leaders directly and indirectly influence various aspects of the organization. Distributed leadership theory demonstrates that organizational structure influences how formal and informal leaders interact within the organization and how leadership should be more broadly defined as actions distributed throughout the organization.⁸

Experts continue to share the productive efforts of groups when Organizational Leadership Theory is practically applied. Mary Sommerville, in her research, reveals that Organizational Leadership is the management of “knowledge production through workplace strategy, structure, activities, and culture, the essential elements of organizational design for knowledge creation.”⁹ Moreover, yet another expert in the area of Organizational Leadership, Gill Robinson Hickman, argues “leadership addresses perspectives of humanism, essentialism (positivism), social constructivism, environmentalism, feminism, and pluralism.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, the effective practice of educating others on the positives of applying this theory remains a constant benefit among practitioners respectively.

Make sure that organizational leaders both understand and can help educate others on the advantages and challenges of a diverse generational [setting]. Ensure also that leaders understand the change management strategy and are equipped to provide the appropriate level and type of support to the various groups. Be careful not to reinforce stereotypes of particular generations. A sound communications strategy uses multiple media to deliver a message. This is especially important when the target recipients comprise a multigenerational population. Sending

⁸ Patti Chance. *Introduction to Educational Leadership & Organizational Behavior: Theory into Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 101.

⁹ Marry M. Somerville. *Informed Systems: Organizational Design for Learning in Action* (Waltham, MA: Chandos Publishing: Elsevier, 2015), 29.

¹⁰ George R. Goethals, and Georgia Jones Sorenson. *The Quest for a General Theory of Leadership* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2006), 32.

multiple message using multiple media will help ensure that the message is received and understood.¹¹

Psychology: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is a theory proposed by Abraham Maslow that suggests that human beings have needs, and although they satisfy one need, another one emerges naturally and demands satisfaction. Maslow suggests five levels of basic human needs that must be satisfied in the following ways: physiological; safety; love/belonging; esteem; and self-actualization. This theory is positioned within the academic discipline of psychology and offers a perspective of human productivity as related to confidence with a meeting of their basic needs.

The idea behind the hierarchy of needs is that we ascend the hierarchy, satisfying each motive in turn. Our first priority is to satisfy our physiological needs such as for food and warmth, because we cannot live without these. Only when these needs have been satisfied do we seek out safety. Once we are safe, the next thing we need to worry about is our social needs—i.e. to belong to a group and have relationships with others. When our social needs are satisfied then esteem needs will become paramount. To satisfy our esteem needs, we need to achieve, to become competent and to be recognized as so. Once this has been achieved, our focus will shift to satisfying our intellectual needs. Intellectual needs include gaining understanding and knowledge. Next in Maslow's hierarchy above intellectual needs come aesthetic needs—i.e. the need for beauty, order and balance. The final human need identified by Maslow is for self-actualization—i.e. to find personal fulfillment and achieve one's potential.¹²

By incorporating a psychological approach to the engaging behaviors of parishioners, the restoration processes would strengthen with a specific emphasis on observing the basic needs of an individual motivates behaviors. In 1943, Abraham

¹¹ Jill Nemiro, Michael M. Beyerlein, Lori Bradley, and Susan Beyerlein. *The Handbook of High Performance Virtual Teams: A Toolkit for Collaborating Across Boundaries* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), 269.

¹² Matt Jarvis. *Theoretical Approaches in Psychology* (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 2000), 66-67.

Maslow wrote a prolific perspective on individual needs through a hierarchy of prioritized requirements for the sustainability of human beings. According to Maslow, humans have the certain fulfillment of needs, for the absence of that fulfillment may lead to physical and psychological detriment.

Community deficiency needs must be met to a significant degree to release community energy for self-actualization. Therefore, some early community building interventions may need to address the social determinants around deficiency needs first before being able to facilitate community engagement for longer-range goals. Many organizations attempt to short-circuit this process, resulting in failure. Transitional strategies are often important to allow adequate time for community infrastructure, political, and policy changes.¹³

The psychological theory that this research incorporates connects the intentional integration of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs about a highly driven community and parishioner-needs focused strategy to foster continuous growth and participation. Churches with a solid approach to investigate the needs of the community will maintain connectivity between the people and leadership alike. The goal of this research is to suggest companies consider incorporating a parishioner needs-based analysis method when conducting restoration and revival planning efforts.

At time, all group members, including the leader, show signs of tension or anxiety. Mild and even moderate anxiety can be useful in promoting group movement. When the tension level becomes too high, the leader takes steps to lower it, after noting which indicants, of anxiety increase and which decrease, and at what points during the session this happens. Anxiety can occur whenever human needs are threatened. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a framework for assessing group members' anxiety. The lowest level of human needs is physiological in nature. [Leaders] can follow several procedures to reduce anxiety in new group members. First, spending time with the members prior to the first group session will help them feel more comfortable, because they will then know at least one person who will be in the group. Admission of your own feelings of tension or

¹³ Raymond L. Goldsteen and Karen Goldsteen. *Introduction to Public Health, Second Edition: Promises and Practice* (New York, NY: Springer Publishing, 2015), 220-221.

anxiety about starting a new [process or idea] will often help the members to feel more comfortable in sharing their own thoughts and feelings.¹⁴

The theme of restoration closely aligned with this theory because of the need to address the immediate concerns of the organization itself. Assessing the needs of the group should take place before trying to tackle an external issue to launch movement and participation among the members. Gaining a complete understanding of the members of an organization: their hindrances, passions, and desires are among the most important components of this theory that help shape the strength of this concept. Since Maslow's published theory, there have been several other studies conducted that offer other factors of motivation.

Psychological research into attribution theory as a source of motivation began with the work of Fritz Heider [1896-1988], who is often described as the father of attribution theory. Heider was interested in how people explain their behaviors. He found that people explain themselves by attributing a particular behavior as being caused by either internal or external forces. Internal forces are labeled dispositions and include personality, motives, attitudes, and feelings. External forces are labeled situation and include societal norms, acts of nature, and random chance. Heider's concepts were advanced by Kelley [1921-2003] who published a co-variation model that includes three main types of information from which to make attribution decisions about individual behavior, 1. Consensus information includes data about how other people, faced with the same situation, behave. 2. Distinctive information includes data about how an individual will respond based upon different stimuli. 3. Consistency information includes data related to the frequency of the individual's behavior in a variety of situations. And observer may use this information when assessing the individual's behavior as either internally or externally attributable.¹⁵

Similarly, the motivation issues faced by the researcher within the context intends to address the physical need to restore the church building before tackling the other less-pressing issues facing cohesiveness. The safety and security element of the human

¹⁴ Carolyn Chambers Clark. *Group Leadership Skills for Nurses & Health Professionals, Fifth Edition* (New York, NY: Spring Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), 28-29.

¹⁵ Patrick T. Hester and Kevin Adams. *Systemic Thinking: Fundamentals for Understanding Problems and Messes* (New York, NY: Springer International Publishing, 2014), 131.

psychological need is where the restoration of the building fits within this concept. With the careful incorporation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, there will be a positive impact on restoration among the people due to the intentional efforts to address the immediate concerns of the people.

Maslow contributed to a growing recognition of the importance of motives for growth, development, and actualization among members of organizations. His ideas also influenced other developments in the social sciences and OB. For example, in a prominent book on leadership, James MacGregor Burns (1978) drew on Maslow's concepts of a hierarchy of needs and of higher-order needs such as self-actualization. Burns observed that transformational leaders—that is, leaders who bring about major transformations in society—do not engage in simple exchanges of benefits with their followers. Rather, they appeal to higher-order motives in the population, including motives for self-actualization that are tied to societal ends, involving visions of a society transformed in ways that fulfill such personal motives. As a political scientist, Burns concentrated on political and societal leaders, but writers on organizational leadership have acknowledged his influence on recent thought about transformational leadership in organizations.¹⁶

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory connected to cultural conditions of human redefined by the undisclosed expectations and demands placed on people within society. Social media is an institution created to capture the fluctuations of people along with the exchange of transparent dialogue concerning their dispositions to different groups of people. "This observation naturally leads to the definition of the community graph: a [social media] network representing the connections between the communities, with the nodes referring to communities and links corresponding to shared members between the communities."¹⁷ Likewise, there is an economic effect on organizations where Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is applied, as leadership will be better able to identify the cause of disinterested and unengaged members. The effective practice of gathering

¹⁶ Hail G. Rainey. *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations: Fourth Edition* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 276.

¹⁷ Thilo Gross, and Hiroki Sayama. *Adaptive Networks: Theory, Models and Applications* (New York, NY: Springer, 2009), 12.

information about the immediate needs faced by members of a group can help to restore unity, purpose, and participation within the group.

Sociology of Architecture Theory

Sociology of Architecture Theory lifts the connectivity between the social and political associations with architecture within society. This theory is intertwined within a variety of academic disciplines, a few of which include: sociology, ecology, history, and environmental psychology. The theme of restoration closely aligned with this theory because of the need to address the immediate concerns of the researcher's context.

As we have seen, the central problem of the sociology of architecture is the understanding of architecture as a medium of communication. This communication process begins with the designer's decision and continues through to the response of the recipient. While the properties of architecture as a specific means of transmission will be treated in the next part, here we intend to focus our attention on the sociological theme itself: what messages can the architect actually transmit by the specific means that are at his disposal (i.e., by the creation of space systems)?¹⁸

One of the blaring concerns experienced by First Baptist Church in Lockhart, Texas', is the immediate need for a new, or newly restored, church building. By addressing the aesthetic need for building repairs and improvements, members of the researcher's context will have a stronger allegiance to their individual and shared purpose. Sociology of Architecture Theory addresses the need of occupants of space to feel comfortable, focused, and ready to tackle the task before they are among the most important components of this theory that help shape the strength of this concept.

In seeking to illuminate the broader social production of architecture, it is important not to discount analysis of the architectural object altogether. It is in

¹⁸ Guy Ankerl. *Experimental Sociology of Architecture: A Guide to Theory, Research and Literature* (Berlin, Germany: Mouton Publishers, 1981), 67.

part the promise of architecture to reflect social values in a tangible, material form that leads political agencies to commission architecture, and architects' attempts to position their building relative to an identity project or public requires engagement with the slippery relationship between social values and architectural form; drawing attention to political mobilization of such projects requires analysis of the connections and disjuncture's between the two. Furthermore, situating the emergence of particular cultural forms relative to broader political and economic transformations can open up research questions centering on, for instance, attempts to embed a particular political project in a socially meaningful, resonant form and aesthetic.¹⁹

This theory was created to address the problem of the practice of architecture within societies, from congresses, and governmental structures, to housing, classroom, and office space, and the messages each design may have on its occupants. The issue of how these structures would be designed, along with the "image" or "message" created was the foremost concern when this theory developed. Problems of political and social identification began the development and expansion of this concept.

Lawrence J. Vale's definitive study of parliament buildings (capitols) in post-colonial contexts is particularly interested in those architectural sites that are mobilized as part of broader political attempts to reposition states relative to internal and external publics. For Vale, crucial political questions in the design of parliaments often center on which architectural style should be chosen and what buildings mean: in his analysis these controversies often serve as proxies for struggles concerning whose identity should be represented publicly. Vale traces a number of disputes in post-colonial contexts—including Papua new Guinea, Brazil, India, and Sri Lank—where the formal architecture of government is bound up with cultural representation of social pasts and futures, collective identities, and the role of the nation in the world; in Vale's account parliament architecture is inextricably bound up with the question of the nation.²⁰

Similarly, the psychological need to feel confident to be a part of an organization that looks the immaculate part is where the theme of restoration connects with the Sociology of Architecture Theory. The issues faced by the researcher within the context

¹⁹ Paul Jones. *The Sociology of Architecture: Constructing Identities* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 5.

²⁰ David Inglis, and Anna-Mari Almila. *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Sociology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2016), 468.

also address the physical need to repair and renovate the church building to restore cohesiveness among the congregants within the context. With the careful incorporation of Sociology of Architecture Theory, there will be a positive impact on restoration among the people. This progression experienced due to the intentional efforts to address the immediate concerns of their disengagement, and often indifference, to the activities in and around the church building.

The most pervasive element of society is culture, which consists of the language, values, beliefs, rules, behaviors, and physical artifacts of a society. Think of it as a society's "personality." Culture gives us codes of conduct—the proper, acceptable ways of doing things. We usually don't think twice about it, yet it colors everything we experience. Human societies would be chaotic and unlivable if they didn't have cultures that allow people to live tougher under the same set of general rules.²¹

Sociology of Architecture Theory connected to culture as the human perception of their environment redefined by the silent trending efforts of society's majority. Social media is an institution created to provide a platform for participants to reveal their likes and disclose their varied dispositions on a range of topics, even the aesthetic recognition, or disapproval, of architecture. Likewise, there is an economic effect on organizations where Sociology of Architecture Theory is applied, as owners of these establishments will be better positioned to gain increased visibility and patronage.

Environment-behavior research, as it is increasingly called today, has until recently been almost totally positivistic. Actually, its original influence on design was due to its science-based approach, which was deemed more serious, reliable, and rational than the then-traditional intuitive, often highly person, design process. In the United States in the early 1960s, the University of California at Berkeley was first to create a College of Environmental Design, thus expanding the

²¹ David M. Newman. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008), 32.

professions of architecture and planning to the general design of environments, including industrial design.²²

Experts continue to analyze critique and test the effectiveness of Sociology of Architecture Theory. One scholar discusses Sociology of Architecture as an observation of how environment, impacts social interaction either in a productive or unproductive way, in particular buildings that house enclosed space. Moreover, yet another expert in the area of Sociology of Architecture Theory, Michael Guggenheim, argues that unless there are interventions to take place, society will recycle space in unconventional ways and use once 'sacred' architecture in less valued ways. "Guggenheim points out that must work in the social studies of architecture takes its cue from classic architectural research and theory, which relied heavily on the concept of the 'building type.'"²³

The primarily positivistic stand of environment-behavior studies has become an area of contention and cause for criticism less from designers and planners, as mentioned earlier, than from the field's own ranks. Questions are raised as to whether people's attitudes feelings, behaviors, and so on, should be pigeonholed in such categories as perception and cognition. What about the whole of people and environment relationships? What about the intangible, the spiritual? As noted, these and other issues have led some to use phenomenological methods to carry out research. Further, a perceived overemphasis on the subject at the expense of the object qualities of the environment has led to dissatisfaction. In reaction, a group of researchers, scholars, and theoreticians has emerged.²⁴

Regardless of the expert position on this subject, the effective practice of gathering information about the sentiments of occupants in space is of the concern of the Sociology of Architecture theorist. It is the researcher's desire to provide ease of comfort,

²² Michael Larice, and Elizabeth Macdonald. *The Urban Design Reader* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 245.

²³ N. Marres. *Material Participation: Technology, the Environment and Everyday Publics* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 121.

²⁴ Michael Larice, and Elizabeth Macdonald. *The Urban Design Reader* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 246.

the allegiance of support to the building occupants and parishioners of the context in ministry. As the theory suggests, if the occupants are happy to be associated with the building they frequent, they will share their joy with others. This level of participation, if the Sociology of Architecture Theory is practically applied, can help to restore unity, purpose, and participation within the group.

The church that stands against the sky is a symbol of the body's architecture and the shaping elements in the lives of the community that build it. The eyes that follow the contours of the church and upon entering take inventory of its furnishing cast the visitor's whole body into a reverent and mindful posture and thereby join him to the community in which he is at first a visitor or stranger. This is an experience that is repeated whenever we regard things with sociological concern: the disintegration or harmony we sense around us enter into us and determines our mood and purpose in the community. Thus the community shapes sociological concern at least as much as it is in turn molded by the ambitions of sociology.²⁵

Conclusion

This theoretical foundations chapter explored the various scholarly perspectives related to the theme of restoration. Connections between elemental factors influencing the researcher's context in ministry with rebuilding the walls of the church included detailed discussions on culture, economics, community, and the process of restoration. The theories and methods found within the researched literature probed with the following academic disciplines: business, sociology, and psychology.

Although restoration and breakthrough are improvements, the real version of improvement belongs to the category of breakthrough. This happens only after the process of restoration. Therefore, in any process to achieve breakthrough which, in fact, is the objective and purpose of improvement, the process should necessarily pass through the phase of restoration. This understanding helps to avoid the false sense of having achieved 'improvement' when it is a mere case of overcoming sickness/inefficiency. In our observation, nearly 60 percent of the

²⁵ John O'Neill. *The Communicative Body: Studies in Communicative Philosophy, Politics, and Sociology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 223.

improvement studies made belong to the category of restoration. To attain world-class competitiveness, each process must exhibit a history of break-through improvements. In any institution/organization, restoration and breakthrough co-exist naturally. Without restoration, breakthrough is not possible. This path of restoration and breakthrough enables us to gain a good understanding of the processes and procedures to improve, exercise better control and to think in terms of creative solution which improves the status quo.²⁶

Organizational Leadership Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, and the Sociology of Architecture Theory were each investigated for the purpose of understanding variance of perspective into the theme of restoration. Each area mentioned were created to solve, or address, a particular problem. The problems that existed before these theories developed were addressed, along with their respective impact on the disciplines to which they each belong.

So, for a restorative Approach to be effective, it needs to be facilitated rather than imposed or 'taught'. Learning to facilitate requires specific skills and understanding. As a way of interacting it is quite different from the didactic teaching methods that many of us experienced as pupils and perhaps practice now in school. In a didactic approach to teaching, you know what you want people to do or to learn. Your job is to get them to that point—in other words, you aim to manage the outcome. As a facilitator, your aim is to manage the process.²⁷

Of all the systematic methods and theories investigated in this study, the researcher has developed a greater insight into understanding the context of the ministry of which restoration is needed. A few of the factors affecting restoration within the researcher's context identified through this research is the need for physical restoration within the setting, along with instituting substantive dialogue among the members of the organization to gain greater insight into their hindrances, immediate needs, and concerns for a more unified organizational environment.

²⁶ Sreenivasan, N. S., and Narayana, V. *Continual Improvement Process* (London, UK: Pearson Education, 2008), 20.

²⁷ Richard Hendry. *Building and Restoring Respectful Relationships in Schools: A Guide to Using Restorative Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 118.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The mission of the First Baptist Church (FBC) in Lockhart, Texas is to “Rebuild the Walls.” As currently serving as the twentieth pastor of FBC, one pastoral objective is to lead the church in achieving a mission of restoration of facilities. The problems of a depraved physical building; relationship disconnections among the congregants; and a growing apathetic disposition among parishioners are some of the challenges hindering the mission. These challenges will be addressed through spiritual reformation and restoration. As a result, the researcher hypothesizes that the context in ministry will encounter an awakening of purpose and a restoration of commitment. The focus will be on “rebuilding the wall” theme to address both problems and solutions offered by the multidisciplinary research conducted. By bringing awareness to the issues and educating participants on the proven methods of restoration, both internally and externally, for successful positive change. Research, study, lectures and peer sessions have aided the composition of four foundational chapters serving as the ministry model’s biblical, historical, theological and theoretical basis. This chapter will give an overview of how these emphasized foundational areas inform the prospective model of ministry.

The Biblical basis for “Rebuilding the Walls” offers a vision for restorative ministry. The Biblical Foundations chapter features the exegesis of an Old and New

Testament passage supporting the restorative project. The selected Old Testament passage is Nehemiah 2:11-20. In the Nehemiah passage, he has obtained a report, repents, prays, obtains resources, and returns to his homeland of Jerusalem. Upon his arrival, he privately inspects and analyzes the wall and then inspires and instructs the people as to the process of restoration. He employs a restorative and social theology ideal for rebuilding the desolate and disgraced community of God. This issue had affected the people negatively and further caused neglect of improving their environment. A central point of emphasis from the narrated passage is Nehemiah's inspired command of "Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem." Nehemiah's example of rebuilding included leadership, evangelism, and corporate worship. Nehemiah was able to liberate the people through similarity of purpose, defined objectives, and unifying those who remained to the need at hand. This narrative lifts the importance of prayer and meditation, and brings awareness to the divine protections and provisions associated with the intentional systematic practice, as evidenced in the life of Nehemiah. As Nehemiah formulated the plan, he involved the community, addressed adversaries, reinstated worship restoration, and caused a revival to occur in Israel. Nehemiah's devotion to God helped to bring restoration to the people of God and ultimately fulfilling the spiritual purposes of God. In the chosen New Testament pericope Matthew 16:18, Jesus frames the importance of confession of Him as the Christ, only revealed by the Spirit of God, and addresses spiritual identity through confession forms the ecclesia. The Matthew passage serves as a catalyst to reignite the passion for identifying with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Peter answers the Lord's question by revelation from the Spirit of God, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus focuses on restoring the spiritual identity

through collective identity as opposed to individuality, culture, economics, or association to a leader. The threat of existence dwells upon those who are part of FBC to adhere to their confession and call to become part of the authentic church and seek restoration of God's purpose.

The Biblical Foundation provided insight into what the Bible says about rebuilding walls and identity. The Historical Foundations chapter provides a narrative of formation or building of an African American or Black church narrative during one of the oppressive times in America. During Americas' early years as a forming nation, America enslaved Africans and brought them to America with no rights to work in the fields and do their master's' bidding. Slavery and its oppressive system held most Blacks in bondage social, physically, economically, and spiritually. Church attendance was allowed but only in the back of the master's church and forced to listen to messages of oppression and subjection. Even when they were allowed their own services, whether the preacher was black or white, they often were told to preach messages of submission to masters. As the Abolitionists movement grew in the North and South slaves were given some allowances to have church on their own, until uprisings spawned a short liberation movement and once again slaves were not permitted these allowances. Once slavery ended, the Black church grew and then began to take the form of their white counterparts at every level. The burgeoning of new organizations began to form as Black pastors, and Christian leaders on both sides helped to form organized churches and then organized conventions. The National Baptist Convention was formed to give Black Baptists an identity and unified front. FBC while not officially part of the NBC her roots are tied to ancestors with a rich heritage of values, beliefs, and Christian principles. FBC maintains

a mission of saving those who are lost and being on mission for Christ. As FBC “Rebuilds the Wall” it restores a commitment to community and continue the Great Commission of Christ found in Matthew 28:19-20.

This Theological Foundations chapter explored the various theological principles related to the theme of restoration. Connections between elemental factors influencing Nehemiah’s example of rebuilding included leadership, evangelism, and corporate worship. The following theological areas of consideration addressed these influencing factors: restoration theology, liberation theology, the theology of prayer, and organizational leadership. The restoration movement, itself, was distinguished between the theological perspectives that derived from this historic crusade. FBC restores the importance of prayer and meditation, and brings awareness to the divine protections and provisions associated with the intentional systematic practice, as evidenced in the life of Nehemiah.

The primary question for the proposed project is to address is how to lead FBC into the restorative process of “Rebuilding the Wall.” The Theoretical Foundations chapter provides connections between elemental factors influencing the researcher’s context in ministry with rebuilding the walls of the church included detailed discussions on culture, economics, community, and the process of restoration. As Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs serves as a model for human motivation and behaviors, and Sociology of Architecture offers indicators for why occupants are engaging the process, this investigation will also launch into the organizational leadership influences that relate to restorative methods. Organizational Leadership is a concept immersed in the world of commerce, is another multidisciplinary concept that addresses the structural opportunities,

about leaders and members of a group, for successful goal actualization outcomes. FBC's mission becomes more defined and clear as leader and people better understand self and needs associated with their community. The facilitator or leader becomes important to leading not personal change but also unifying the collective to bring about the desired physical restoration of the facility.

The mission of FBC is to "Rebuild the wall." Achieving this project of the church is unattainable unless the church addresses the need for physical restoration. This project's intent is to rebuild the facility and reignite a sense of hope in the formation of congregational identity. The area encompassing FBC is disadvantaged, in desperate need of restoration, and renewed focus on meeting community needs. "Rebuild the wall," and FBC will begin to restore the physical church, restore hope, and fulfill the Great Commission mission of Jesus Christ within its community.

Methodology

The hypothesis of this investigation will test the effectiveness of planned instruction-led presentations offered to participants from this study and their changed perspective on both problems and solutions about the restoration process accordingly. The educational design will focus on the "rebuilding of the wall" theme to address both problems and solutions offered by the multidisciplinary research conducted. By bringing awareness to the issues and educating participants on the proven methods of restoration, both internally and externally, for successful positive change. The qualitative methodology will test the ministry model with workshops, sermons, leadership strategic

planning sessions, congregational strategic planning sessions, and a church planning meeting for the treatment of outcomes.

The following methodology differs from the initially proposed methodology due to the occurrence of extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the researcher. During project development, the First Baptist Church encountered the crisis of losing the usage of her facility as a result of being declared high risk. The crisis of worship space did not permit the timeframe needed to implement the proposed project plan. To address the issue as well as continue with project development, the researcher devised an alternative methodological approach. The pastor/researcher will note below the point in the process wherein the change in methodology occurred.

The process began with a meeting with Baptist General Convention Architectural Department. The meeting consisted of the representative and the pastor/researcher. The meeting was to gain information and study the physical structure and grounds to prepare an assessment to be brought back to the church with recommendations. The representative formulated results and contacted pastor/researcher to set up next meeting to share results.

Next was a meeting with Baptist General Convention representative rendering of results of the assessment. The pastor/researcher and chairman of the deacons, as well as the representative, were present for the meeting. The meeting was for sharing the results of the assessment and recommendations of the representative. Our expectation of the representative was to give us options of plans, phases, and or phases on how to proceed forward with a building project and resources to help us leverage the completion of the ensuing project.

The next process would be the pastor/researcher devoting to prayer and fasting for God-given insight and vision. The pastor/researcher was the first to engage in the focused spiritual discipline. Then after a month the pastor/researcher would have congregational prayer meeting to focus on devoting to prayer for God to give clarity to vision. The personal prayer time focused on hearing God's voice in the process to gain clarity and vision to move forward with next steps. The outcome was to gain vision and be able to formulate a plan to move forward.

The process of methodology included the strategic leadership planning sessions. The first session was for those serving in a leadership capacity at First Baptist Church: deacons, church clerk, church secretary, and church leaders. The meeting was designed to share results of the representative's assessment and recommendations. It also allowed the pastor to share vision and introduce the new church mission "Raise the Roof." The theme supported the mission of restoring the deteriorating facility of First Baptist Church. The outcome of the meeting was clarity of purpose for leadership envision the new mission, answer questions, and obtain a consensus of support to move forward together.

Comprising the second session were of those who serve in leadership and the finance ministry at First Baptist Church. The deacons are involved in decision making and are official signers of checks, the financial clerk who maintains checks and balances and generates checks, the church treasurer and his team of counters, and church secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to give an update on church finance balances especially the building fund. The "Raise the Roof" theme and mission was introduced to the team. There was a review of the Baptist General Convention's Architectural Department representative's report and proposed suggestions. Then there was a discussion on a

suggested strategy to raise additional funds to support “Raise the Roof.” The outcomes desired from the session would be to provide further clarity of the mission “Raise the Roof,” and sustain support from all who serve in an official capacity within the church. The expected outcome was to develop financial strategy or Capital Campaign to introduce to the church for the raising of additional funding.

The pastor/researcher preached sermons introducing the “Raise the Roof” mission theme. These sermons were preached to the congregation at First Baptist Church and designed to introduce the new mission. The purpose of preaching sermon series was to introduce the membership to Nehemiah’s personality, and passion, the promises of God, the priority of prayer, the current reflection of the facility, the building of unity, and results of finding favor with God in rebuilding the wall. The expected outcomes of preaching the sermon series were to give spiritual insight to the conditions of the facility, increase support, and generate excitement while at the same time unifying the people to participate in the process of rebuilding walls.

The next process was to have a church planning meeting. The pastor addressed the entire church membership during the meeting. The church planning meeting was to inform the membership of the results of the Convention representative, review options or suggested phases. What the pastor/researcher expected from the meeting was to be transparent about assessment, gain insight from membership by way of question and answer, and then make a decision by vote upon next steps.

The final process was a congregational strategic workshop. The workshop was presented by a Convention representative for the entire church membership. The workshop was designed to process with the congregation by way of conversation to

determine value. The expected outcome of the process was to empower the church members in the conversation, to discover the best future for the church, understand the purpose of the church, and discover First Baptist identity.

Implementation

Due to the major transitional circumstances, the proposed project was abandoned to gain a better-advised method of supporting the “Rebuilding the Walls of First Baptist Church.” The following implementation differs due to the occurrence of extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the researcher. During project development, the First Baptist Church encountered the crisis of losing the usage of her facility as a result of being declared high risk. The crisis of worship space did not permit the timeframe needed to implement the proposed project plan. To address the issue as well as continue with project development, the researcher devised an alternative methodological approach. The researcher will note below the point in the process wherein the change in methodology occurred.

There were initial meetings leading into one pre-meeting and two post-meeting to leading up to the following process. The meeting was initiated by the pastor contacting the Baptist General Convention of Texas which the church is an official member. The purpose would be to reach the Architectural Division to obtain information and a free church structure assessment. Upon receiving confirmation from the Church Architecture department, scheduled a site visit with a representative. The representative came and made an assessment of the entire facility and scheduled a return visit to share results.

The ensuing visit with the representative would be the sharing of the results and give suggestions on how to restore the walls of First Baptist Church.

The convention representative suggested the congregation retain a contractor from within the surrounding area of the church. The meeting scheduled with CCC Builders owner Bobby Captain who came highly suggested by Convention representative. The contractor recommended the congregation contact its insurance provider to determine the extent of the current damage. The adjuster determined the property a high risk and had subsequently determined the facility uninsurable.

Upon the investigation of the facility, he made suggestions for how we should move forward. The main suggestion was to get the insurance company to send an adjuster to appraise the damage and make a claim and proceed with giving us the negotiated coverage details. The appointment with the adjuster was scheduled, and the building deemed an extremely high risk, and we are to lose coverage at the end of the cycled month. Receiving the news from the insurance company the leadership and pastor began to pray and seek out different insurance companies to cover the church's needs. The insurance coverage costs would be to the extreme of high, and the leadership would become discouraged. The pastor remembered Nehemiah's prayer. We would transition from the main worship facility to the attached fellowship hall until insurance company informed us the entire facility front and back was uninsurable. The pastor sought counsel with convention representative and deacon leadership.

The pastor being part of the Lockhart Ministerial Alliance formed significant friendships. James Greene, a Certified Lay Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, initiated an invite to worship corporately one Sunday out of the month at First Presbyterian. Rev.

James Lee, a moderator for the Presbyterian Intercultural Network, encouraged the pastors to seek out the experience and even possibly to survive together as two churches in one location. Rev. Greene and researcher would meet to discuss the move and the pros and cons and the differences of worship together. Rev. Greene would share the desire of their congregation to help in the effort to assist us as we look toward transition. Once his Board of Elders approved the transition, then the researcher proceeded to initiate a plan through prayer for a month. The researcher shared the steps of transition with First Baptist leadership, they agreed to the transition. The researcher then shared the plans of transition with the congregation after a Sunday morning worship. There were concerns from the congregation on the transition. The first question raised was what is going to happen to our church once we leave and what will be the timeline for return to First Baptist facility? The pastor/researcher shared we would begin the process of removing items from the main worship facility into storage and make preparations for future construction on the facility. Another question posed was why can't we remain here at First Baptist? The added comment of those who raised and agreed to this question was "There is nothing wrong with our facility". The pastor/researcher shared and leadership would support the fact of the conditions of the facility as well as the huge liability risks of being in an uninsured building. The pastor researcher then shared an experience where one of the members fell from the steps but was not injured nor sought to sue or hold the church liable for any medical treatment. Thankfully they were not seriously injured or incurred any medical expenses. The final statement from a member helped to seal the deal. They stated, "We can't remain here any longer if God is going to do a great thing through us. We should be grateful another church is open to welcome us to be part of

their facility and worship.” The pastor/researcher asked were there anymore questions and then transitioned to vote by way of showing of hands and unamously congregation agreed to transition from the current facility to worship with First Presbyterian Church the first Sunday in January 2016.

The transition of the church came with some expected and unexpected costs to First Baptist. The membership declined after month two, five, and seven as we worshiped. First Baptist’s average Sunday membership attendance was sixty-five before the transition. We saw a decline from 65 to 35 Sunday morning attendees and experienced a loss of 10 members to joining other churches. The decline signified a 54% decrease in worship attendance. A decline in worship attendance suffers in loss of financial contributions. The average monthly income intake was approximate \$6,000, and after month six the average monthly intake was \$2,700. The transition ended after month 12, and First Baptist returned to their facility.

During the twelve-month transition, the pastor/researcher and deacon leadership worked to rebuild the facility at First Baptist. The pastor met with Roy Harper & Associates the recommended Architectural firm from the representative of the Convention. Site visits made and plans were designed by Architect to meet the congregational needs of the facility. Contacts with contractors, but they were vetted and were not suitable to perform the job. The plan to move forward is to obtain a contractor, raise funds to support the rebuilding project, and maintain. First Baptist has patiently waited.

Summary of Learning

The Doctor of Ministry process and the project of “Rebuilding the Walls” has changed the researcher. The process has refined the ability to see life and ministry through a different set of lenses. Not that the researcher was unable to see things, but the enhancement of those abilities has heightened. Before entering the process, there were gifts of intuition and perception, but those gifts have obtained a new level of freedom to see what is and what is not perceptively.

The researcher has also experienced a new level of spiritual patience. The ability to wait on God until He moves in His provision for achievable outcomes. The building project has been a tedious one, and while discouragement and disappointment usually lead to depression, the researcher has been steadfast in doing things God’s way and not moving until hearing God’s voice. The discipline of prayer has been a plus and a needed practice in encountering the project at its various levels. The membership has begun to notice and voice a wait on God mentality as well.

The process allowed the researcher to leverage resources and relationships gained over the years to assist in the rebuilding project. The researcher being a native of the context was able to bridge some gaps a new pastor may have taken some years to form. Also having prior knowledge of the visions and movements of former pastors’ allowed the researcher to be able to maneuver through or away from potential traps. The relationships gained through prior associations with the Baptist General Convention of Texas allowed the researcher to enter doors with prior knowledge or due to established relationships with executives. The researcher was able to gain access to representatives

to give assessments and make trusted professional decisions to assist in the rebuilding project.

Another transitional leadership growth point was when the researcher had to make a decision of what to do and where to go after the loss of insurance. We could take a risk and remain and bear the brunt of insurance liability in the event of any accidents, or we could find a place of safety. The pastor/researcher made a decision that even deacon leadership was unwilling to do. Sometimes one has to do what is necessary despite the rebuke or the backlash. We made the decision to join in corporate worship First Presbyterian Church. The transitional process of worshipping in a different context, First Presbyterian Church, did not affect the researcher as much as it did the congregation. The excitement of worshipping at a different facility was welcomed. The excitement wore off and then began the travail of the transition. We were in a different environment, historic well kept facility, fresh atmosphere of welcoming people, but the newness became old real quick. The researcher learned a great leadership lesson of taking care of the flock at whatever cost. The paternal instincts in pastoring God's people grew in the researcher. The development of integrity and pastoral care from the point of making sure everyone is treated equally and respectfully. This was even applied among the Presbyterian church members.

We also learned that in being different and acknowledging the difference still does not change the heart of humanity. Racial barriers exist. People will change, but the complete eradication of racial tension and tendencies will not until Jesus returns. The process of transitioning through the Presbyterian church allowed us to experience diversity. The diversity was seen in race and denomination. We were unable to get past

both because to speak to one; one had to address the other. We, First Baptist, are an African American Baptist Church, and First Presbyterian is a Reformed-Tradition. One body in Christ, but separated by race.

We learned in transition how to handle losses and setbacks. The implementation of the project made a major shift requiring the making of immediate decisions. Difficult, trying, but prior preparation while serving in full-time staff ministry at Antioch Baptist Church helped the pastor/researcher to buffet some of what could have been crucial points of weakness and inability to lead effectively. We learn to deal with loss in membership because of the transition. We learned not to let the personal decisions of others to affect or effect the outcome of what God purposed for us to do at First Baptist. Some are not able to handle transition and they make decisions that are not always favorable, but we continue to fulfill God's plan for us.

During the transition we learned to listen to the wisdom of those who have been in leadership within the church and other senior pastors. The mark of a true leader is humility. The mark of a leader is the ability to say one does not know it all and is willing to seek assistance in the area needed. The researcher through this process has learned to listen to those who have wisdom and experience in the areas of needed attention. Our cohort meetings at United during plenary sessions have been a learning experience to listen and gain clarity from mentors, Dean Hudson, guest speakers, and most of all our brothers and sisters within our group.

Throughout this entire project the researcher and participants have learned the simple fact, "He may not come when you want Him, but He's right on time." This adage is timely for the context. We have transitioned, and God has used our transitional

experience to rebuild our identity in relationship to Him and each other. The transition has brought us back to our home, and we are worshipping in the fellowship hall of the church. We have sought out some of the same insurance companies to reassess our fellowship hall for coverage and have been approved by one of the same companies who denied us coverage after the decline of another. We have seen a slight increase of members returning to worship on Sunday mornings. The financial offering has slightly rebounded as well. The leadership and pastor have captured at least one bid from a contractor to facilitate in the rebuilding of the church. A meeting with an architect Roy Harper & Associates has been scheduled, and we anticipate God moving in a mighty way. The walls of First Baptist will be restored and the church will survive as the oldest historic African American Baptist Church in Lockhart, Texas.

Conclusion

From the perspective of the DMin candidate the project of a Holistic Approach to Rebuild Small Rural Church Walls was successful. The goals were to rebuild the physical facility and re-establish congregational identity. The intended outcome of rebuilt physical walls has not been completed however a solid plan is in place. Also the project goal of re-establishing First Baptist Church identity was achieved through the process of implementing the DMin project.

The projects initial frame of reference was explored in the Biblical Foundations chapter with Nehemiah as he served in Persia but had a passion for his homeland. His mind was centered on Jerusalem and was concerned for its well-being. In the DMin project, a kindred connection was formed with Nehemiah and the concern for First

Baptist became a welcomed burden. Examining Nehemiah's process in achieving the process of restoration was a welcomed insight in how to restore the walls of First Baptist. Although research swivels between how long it took Nehemiah to complete the project it should be noted the focus was on completion. We may not have completed the physical restoration, but it is still showing healthy signs of moving closer to completion. The Nehemiah process was beneficial in providing organizational leadership. He was able to gather resources, unify people, and fulfill the purpose of achieving the task.

The chapter featuring the historical research allowed us to study the formation of a historical institution within the Baptist denomination. The establishment of Baptist identity become evident in our transition period as we matriculated in worship with the Presbyterian church. The experience of learning a different worship style and belief system was eye opening to our Baptist church. We were able to distinguish what it meant to be a Baptist/African-American church and how important it was to state our identity and find value in being who we are, but most of all whom we have become in Christ.

Due to the crisis of loss of worship space, some of the later processes of discussion in areas of the theological and theoretical are important but were not able to be tested. Significant elements of the importance of each view still apply to the practical approaches to the project. The theological chapter dealt with restoration, liberation, prayer, and organizational leadership. These key areas provide for us a concept of how restoration related to the narrative of Nehemiah and First Baptist Church. The processes in the theoretical chapter are important to the foundational elements of the Christian walk in Christ. Through the faith journey of Nehemiah, we see what it means to be a child of God and how to restore unity and purpose. The subject of restoration as it applies to the

theoretical chapter covered multi-disciplinary academic disciplines. The planned process was to engage an existing group who were not engaged in the unifying efforts. While the loss of worship space prevented further exploration in this process, the DMin candidate will continue to seek as growth in the future to readdress this process and information.

The DMin process and project has been rewarding in the arena of academic achievement and spiritual growth. The process of maturation was encountered through self-discovery and encountering the project. The DMin candidate obtained a greater awareness of the restorative needs within the context and was able to obtain clarity in the process. The process does involve some future growth as it applies to organizational leadership in the rural. A leader must value the ways of approached context and not force new ways upon established leadership models. Teaching new leadership methods, procedures, and models take patience and insight as change is encouraged. Through this process, First Baptist Church continues to rebuild the walls and establish our wall of identity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, C.C. "Negro Baptists and Foreign Missions, Philadelphia: The Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., 1952."
- Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read A Book*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1972.
- Albright, W.F., and C.S. Mann. *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2013.
- Allison, William H. *Baptist Ecclesiology: An Original Anthology*. New York, NY: Arno Press, 1980.
- Ammerman, Nancy. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Ankerl, Guy. *Experimental Sociology of Architecture: A Guide to Theory, Research and Literature*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton Publishers, 1981.
- Armstrong, O.K. and Marjorie Armstrong. *The Baptists in America*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979.
- Badke, William. *Research Strategies*. 5th ed. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse LLC, 2014.
- Baldwin, James. *Go Tell It On the Mountain*. New York: Dell, 1952.
- Banks, Williams L. *A History of Black Baptists in the United States*. Philadelphia, PA: Continental Press, 1987.
- Bebbington, David W. "British Baptist Crucicentrism Since the Late Eighteenth Century." *Baptist Quarterly* 44 No. 5 Part2 (January 1, 2012): 278-290.
- Becking, Bob, and Peels, Eric. *Psalms and Prayers: Papers Read at the Joint meeting of the Society of Old Testament Study*. The Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 2007.

- Bennett, Lerone. *Before the Mayflower Penguin: A History of the Negro in America 1619-1964*. 1976. Rev. ed. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1964.
- Bettenson, Henry. *Documents of the Christian Church*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Betteridge, Alan. "When associations did not work." *Baptist Quarterly* 44, no. 5 (January 1, 2012).
- Bickers, Dennis. *The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005.
- Blackaby, Henry T., and Melvin D. Blackaby. *A God Centered Church*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007.
- Brackett, Jeffrey R. *The Negro in Maryland: A Study of the Institution of Slavery*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1889.
- Bolin, Thomas M. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015.
—, *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1959.
- Bradburn, Norman M. et al. *Asking Questions: The Definitive Guide to Questionnaire Design-For Market Research, Political Polls, and Social Health Questionnaires*, Revised ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass imprint of John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2004.
- Bradley Martia. "The Work and Witness of Southern Negro Baptist Women from 1865 until 1935." *Quarterly Review* 37 (October-December 1976).
- Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Louisville, KY: The Westminster Press, 1981.
- Buechner, Frederick. *Wishful thinking: A Seeker's ABC*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973.
- Burton, Gary P. "The founding four churches: an overview of Baptist beginnings in Montgomery county, Alabama." *Baptist History and Heritage* 47 no. 1 (January 1, 2012).
- Carroll, Denis. *What is Liberation Theology?* Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press LTD, 1987.
- Chance, Patti. *Introduction to Educational Leadership & Organizational Behavior: Theory into Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009.

- Clark, Carolyn Chambers. *Group Leadership Skills for Nurses & Health Professionals, Fifth Edition*. New York, NY: Spring Publishing Company, Inc., 2003.
- Clarke, Howard. *The Gospel Of Matthew And Its Readers: A Historical Introduction to the First Gospel*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Cone, James H. *Black Theology and Black Power*. New York, NY: The Seabury Press, 1969.
- Coggins, R.J. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2014.
- Curran, Charles. *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002.
- Darby, Stephen, and Sear, David. *River Restoration: Managing the Uncertainty in Restoring Physical Habitat*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008.
- Davies, Gordon F. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999.
- Dockery, David S. "Southern Baptist Theology in the Twentieth Century: A Denomination Coming of Age." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 54 no. 2 (Spring, 2012).
- Early, Joseph E. Jr. "Richard Henry Boyd: shaper of Black Baptist Identity." *Baptist History And Heritage* 42, no. 3 (September 2007): 91-104.
- Egan, Dave, Hjerpe, Evan E., and Abrams, Jesse. *Human Dimensions of Ecological Restoration: Integrating Science, Nature, and Culture*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011.
- Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn. *In An Age Of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*. Atlanta, GA: Scholar Press, 1988.
- Everett, Stewart James. "Visions of a preacher man: Will D. Campbell's use of images in his life, thought, and work." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 39 no. 2 (June 1, 2012).
- Fitts, Leroy. *A History of Black Baptists*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1985.
- Frazier, E. Franklin. *The Negro in the United States*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1957.

- Freedman, Samuel G. *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of A Black Church*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1993.
- Forrest, Jeff. "Slaves, Sex and Sin: Adultery, Forced Separation and Baptist Church Discipline in Middle Georgia." *Slavery & Abolition* 33 no.3 (September 2012).
- Foster, Douglas A. *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004.
- Garrett, Leroy. *Stone-Campbell Movement: The Story of the American Restoration Movement*. New York, NY: College Press Publishing, 2006.
- Garrett, James L., ed. *Baptist Relations with Other Christians*. Valley Forge, VA: Judson Press, 1974.
- Goethals, George R., and Sorenson, Georgia Jones. *The Quest for a General Theory of Leadership*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2006.
- Goldsteen, Raymond L., and Goldsteen, Karen. *Introduction to Public Health, Second Edition: Promises and Practice*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing, 2015.
- Goodliff, Andrew. "The language of 'Baptist family'." *Baptist Quarterly* 44 no. 6 (April 1, 2012).
- Grabbe, Lester L. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1998.
- Griffin, Darrell D. *Navigating Pastoral Leadership in the Transition Zone*. Hagerstown, MA: MMGI Books, 2012.
- Grizzard, F. E., and Smith, D. B. *Jamestown Colony: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2007.
- Gross, Thilo, and Sayama, Hiroki. *Adaptive Networks: Theory, Models and Applications*. New York, NY: Springer, 2009.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation*. New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1973.
- Hagberg, Janet O., and Robert A. Guelich. *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith*. 2nd ed. Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2005.
- Hagner, Donald A. *World Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1995.
- Harrison, Paul M. *Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959). Dockery sets forth six variant positions found among biblical inerrantists.

- Heath, Gordon L. *Doing Church History*. Toronto, Canada: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- Holcomb, Carol Crawford. "Building a publishing empire: The Annie Armstrong era of WMU, SBC." *Baptist Quarterly* 47 no. 1 (March 1, 2012).
- Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommeers. *A Writers Reference*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins. 8th ed., 2015.
- Harris, Del. *On Point: Four Steps to Better Life Teams*. Charleston, SC: Advantage, 2012.
- Harrison, Victoria. *Religion and Modern Thought*. London, UK: SCM Press, 2007.
- Hawley, Patricia. *Desperate for Authenticity: A Critical Analysis of the Feminist Theology of the Feminist Theology of Virginia Ramey Mollenkott*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2010.
- Healey, Joseph G., and Jeanne Hinton. *Small Christian communities today: capturing the new moment*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.
- Hendry, Richard. *Building and Restoring Respectful Relationships in Schools: A Guide to Using Restorative Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009.
- Heath, Gordon L. *Doing Church History*. Toronto, Canada: Clements Publishing, 2008.
- Hester, Patrick T., and Adams, Kevin. *Systemic Thinking: Fundamentals for Understanding Problems and Messes*. New York, NY: Springer International Publishing, 2014.
- Inglis, David, and Almila, Anna-Mari. *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2016.
- Jarvis, Matt. *Theoretical Approaches in Psychology*. Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 2000.
- Jethani, Skye. *Futureville: Discover Your Purpose For Today By Reimagining Tomorrow*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- , *The Divine Commodity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Jonas, Glenn. "Nurturing the vision: highlights from a 200-year-old Baptist church in Raleigh North Carolina." *Baptist History and Heritage* 47 no. 2 (June 1, 2012).
- Jones, Paul. *The Sociology of Architecture: Constructing Identities*. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2011.

- Jung, L. Shannon, and Mary Agria. *Rural Congregational Studies*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Lambdin, E. *The Grown up Church: Restoration of the New Testament Church*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2014.
- Larice, Michael, and Macdonald, Elizabeth. *The Urban Design Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.
- Leonard, Bill J. *Baptist Ways A History*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003.
—, “Conviction and contradiction: reassessing theological formation in Baptist identity.” *Baptist History and Heritage* 47 no. 2 (June 1, 2012).
- Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.
- Losch, Richard R. *All the People in the Bible: An A-Z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.
- Lotz, Denton. “Baptists against racism and ethnic conflict...worldwide.” *Review & Expositor* 109 no. 1 (December 1, 2012).
- Lysaught, Therese. *On moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives on Medical Ethics*, 3rd Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.
- Matthews, W. *World Religions*, 7th Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2013.
- Marres, N. *Material Participation: Technology, the Environment and Everyday Publics*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Mezirow, Jack and Taylor, Edward W. *Transformative Learning In Practice: Insights from Community, Workplace, and Higher Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass imprint of John Wiley and Sons, 2009.
- McEntire, David A. *Disciplines, Disasters, and Emergency Management: The Convergence and Divergence of Concepts, Issues and Trends from the Research Literature*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, 2007.
- McGrath, A. E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th Ed. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2011.
- Miles, Matthew B., et al. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2013.

- Mitch, Curtis, and Edward Sri. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Moore, Joy J. "Race in Evangelical America." *Christian Reflection* 35, (2010).
- Moore, W.T. *His Heart is Black*. Atlanta: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1978.
- Morden, Peter J. "C.H. Spurgeon and prayer." *Evangelical Quarterly* 84, no. 5 (October 1, 2012).
- National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://www.nationalbaptist.com/about-us/our-history/index.html>.
- Nieman, Donald G. *Church and Community Among Black Southerners, 1865-1900*. New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Nemiro, Jill, Beyerlein, Michael M., Bradley, Lori, and Beyerlein, Susan. *The Handbook of High Performance Virtual Teams: A Toolkit for Collaborating Across Boundaries*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Newman, David M. *Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008.
- Ntombana, Luvuyo, and Adam Perry. "Exploring the critical moments when the Baptist denomination divided: does revisiting these moment give hope to reconciliation between the 'Union' and 'Convention'?" *Theological Studies* 68 no. 1 (January 1, 2012).
- O'Brien, Brandon J. *the strategically Small church*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2010.
- O'Day, Gail R., and Petersen, David L. *Theological Bible Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.
- O'Neill, John. *The Communicative Body: Studies in Communicative Philosophy, Politics, and Sociology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989.
- Ogden, Greg, and Meyer, Daniel. *Leadership Essentials: Shaping Vision, multiplying Influence, Defining Character*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.
- Parker, Joseph C. Jr. "Smelling Fires of Racism." *Christian Reflection* 35, (2010).
- Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Autobiography: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Story*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998.

- Pelton, Robert. *Small Christian Communities: Imagining Future Church*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.
- Penn, Garland I., *The United Negro: His Problems and His Progress*. Atlanta, GA: The Lutheran Publishing Company, 1902.
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981.
- Pinson, William M. Jr., Rosalie Beck, James Semple, Ebbie Smith, *Beliefs Important to Baptists*. Dallas, TX: BaptistWay Press, 2011.
- Pius, N. H. *An Outline of Baptist History*. Nashville, TN: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1911.
- Pratt, Zane, et al. "The SBJT forum: God the Son." *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 16 no. 2 (June 1, 2012).
- Prime-Godwin, Georgette V. *The Nehemiah Prototype: A Complementary Guide to Organizational Leadership for the 21st Century Church*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2014.
- Prince, Derek. *Secrets of a Prayer Warrior*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2009.
- Proctor, Samuel DeWitt. *The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith*. New York, NY: Judson Press, 1999.
- Rainer, Thomas. *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2014.
- "Growing Healthy Churches Together." <http://thomrainer.com>. June 18, 2014. Accessed November 21, 2014. <http://thomrainer.com/2014/06/dangerous-third-year-pastoral-tenure/>.
- , *I Am A Church Member*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2013.
- Rainey, Hail G. *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations: Fourth Edition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Reed, William B. *Echoes of The Emancipation Proclamation*. Madison, NJ: W. B. Reed, 1908.
- Reid, III, Frank M. *Restoring the House of God: A Plea for Radical Reformation*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2000.
- Roberts, Carol M. *The Dissertation Journey 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2010.

- Rupp, Daniel I. *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*. Philadelphia, PA: J. Y. Humphreys, 1844.
- Sander, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007.
- Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2016.
- Sharrock, Russell. *Covenant Theology: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Pentecostal Covenant Theology*. Morrisville, NC: Lulu Enterprises, Inc., 2006.
- Shenk, D. W. *Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church: Exploring the Mission of Two Communities*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003.
- Smith, J. Alfred, ed. *The Church in Bold Mission; A Guidebook on Black Church Development*. Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1977.
- , *On the Jericho Road*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Somerville, Marry M. *Informed Systems: Organizational Design for Learning in Action*. Waltham, MA: Chandos Publishing: Elsevier, 2015.
- Spangler, Jewel L. *Protestant Dissenters in the Early South*. Journal of Souther Religion 14 (2012): <http://jsr.fsu.edu/issues/vol14/spangler.html>.
- Spear, Wayne R. *Talking to God: The Theology of Prayer*. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2002.
- Sreenivasan, N. S., and Narayana, V. *Continual Improvement Process*. London, UK: Pearson Education, 2008.
- Stewart, Cynthia. *The Catholic Church: A Brief Popular History*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2008.
- Stone, Bryan P. *Compassionate Ministry*. Maryknoll, NY. Orbis Books, 1996.
- The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.
- Tiffany, Frrederick C. and Sharon H. Ringe. *Biblical Interpretation A Road Map*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Throntveit, Mark A. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992.
- Thomas, Owen C., and Ellen K. Wondra. *Introduction to Theology*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2002.

- Thompson, Alfred L. *Bars, Bridges, & Blessings: A Three Dimensional Theory for Your Success*. Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2015.
- Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1976.
 —, *With Head and Heart*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1979.
- Tull, James E. *Shapers of Baptist Thought*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1972.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations 8th edition*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Turner, David. *An Introduction to Liberation Theology*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1994.
- Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.
- Whalen, Teresa. *The Authentic Doctrine of the Eucharist*. Evanston, IL: Sheed & Ward, 1993.
- Washington, James Melvin. *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power*. Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1986.
- Weaver, Doug. "The Origins of Truett Seminary." *Christian Ethics Today* 20 no. 3 (Summer, 2012).
- Williamson, H.G.M. *World Biblical Commentary Ezra, Nehemiah volume 16*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.
- Woods, Lonnie. *It's In The System*. Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2010.
- Woolley, Davis C. and others. *Baptist Advance*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1964.
- Work, Telford. *Ain't Too Proud to Beg: Living Through The Lord's Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007.